

palimpsest

déserts

uc san diego department of music

MUSICIANS

Dance for Burgess

Piccolo: Kimberly Turney
E-Flat Clarinet: Terri Tunncliff
B-Flat Clarinet: Curt Miller
Bass Clarinet: Ariana Lamon-Anderson
Horn: Warren Gref
Trumpet: Calvin Price, Elizabeth Meeker
Trombone: Ian Carroll
Tuba: Jonathan Piper
Percussion: Dustin Donahue, Bonnie Whiting Smith, Stephen Solook

scatter (version 2010)

Flutes: Christine Tavalacci
Clarinets: Ariana Lamon-Anderson
Piano: Brendan Nguyen
Percussion: Stephen Solook
Violin: Batya MacAdam-Somer
Cello: Ashley Walters

Piccola Musica Notturna

Flute: Berglind María Tómasdóttir
Oboe: Sarah Skuster
Clarinet: Curt Miller
Harp: Laura Vaughan
Celesta: Brendan Nguyen
Violin: Batya MacAdam-Somer
Viola: Travis Maril
Cello: Ashley Walters

Intégrales

Piccolos: Christine Tavalacci, Kimberly Turney
E-flat Clarinet: Terri Tunncliff
B-flat Clarinet: Ariana Lamon-Anderson
Horn: Warren Gref

Trumpets: Calvin Price, Elizabeth Meeker
Trumpet: Elizabeth Meeker
Trombone: Eric Starr, James Prindle, Ian Carroll
Percussion: Brian Archinal, Dustin Donahue, Stephen Solook, Bonnie Whiting Smith

**for someone else that it seems
you've always wanted**

Flutes: Christine Tavalacci, Berglind María Tómasdóttir
Clarinets: Ariana Lamon-Anderson, Curt Miller
Horns: Warren Gref, Tricia Skye
Trumpets: Calvin Price, Elizabeth Meeker, Fenton Frear
Trombones: Ian Carroll, Eric Starr, Kyle Covington
Tubas: Jonathan Piper, Andrew Allen
Piano: Brendan Nguyen
Percussion: Justin DeHart, Stephen Solook, Bonnie Whiting Smith

Déserts

Piccolo: Christine Tavalacci
Flute: Berglind María Tómasdóttir
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Bass Clarinet: Curt Miller
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4.28.2010

PALIMPSEST DÉSERTS

Steven Schick, conductor

Intégrales (1926)

Edgard Varèse

Piccola Musica Notturna (1954)

Luigi Dallapiccola

scatter (version 2010) (first performance)

Katharina Rosenberger

intermission

Dance for Burgess (1947)

Edgard Varèse

**for someone else that it seems
you've always wanted** (2010) (first performance)

Nicholas Deyoe

Déserts (1954)

Edgard Varèse

please turn off cell phones




Introduction

We are calling tonight's concert Palimpsest. The word brings with it several layers of meaning. A palimpsest is an over-written parchment, one that was used then scraped clean for re-use. Traces of older texts were often visible just beneath the surface as though newer writing brought with it vestiges of the old. Or in another view of palimpsest the present consumes the past as it sees fit for its own purposes. In either event we are reminded that there was a world before us. And whether we use our past as a foundation for present thought or as the target of a wrecking ball, we cannot ignore it.

Tonight's concert takes the implications of palimpsest seriously, telescoping back through the 20th century in search of a foundation for two premiere performances of works from 2010. We begin by sinking roots deep into one of the most protean musical imaginations the world has ever known: Edgard Varèse. On a personal note, almost everything I love about percussion playing I first experienced playing Varèse. And for many of us as we rehearsed for tonight's concert (re)discoveries abounded. Varèse connects us to the sheer power of noise, to rhythmic vitality, and to a fascinating cross-wiring of the scientific to the mystical. And above all Varèse is electric, whether that be reflected in the taunted solo lines of *Intégrales* (1926), the raucous proto-punk outbursts of his alluring and brief *Dance for Burgess* (1947), or the geometric extrusions of one of the masterpieces of the 20th century, *Déserts* (1954).

In this latest piece we see Varèse the visionary, combining for nearly the first time acoustic instruments with electronically produced "interpolations." But as futuristic as *Déserts* must have sounded at its premiere, it too is a palimpsest and carries forward the embedded geologies of its past. Some authors have noted the resemblance of the high, sustained tones to a piercing train whistle that Varèse recalled from his youth. Others mention that indications in German of "gestoppft" in some horn parts might have come from Varèse's brief association in Berlin with Richard Strauss. Even if they are true these aspects of the past are insignificant when one considers the deep, primordial past that in Varèse never seems very far away. This past seems to reach back to a pre-lingual state, to a music on the verge of utterance. On the most intimate level the moaning of the "lion's roar" or the vocalise of the guiro parallels the development of human speech, and at the other extreme terrifying wind and brass



explosions parse the apocalyptic poetry of the cosmos (as Varèse implies in his choice of an epigraph by Paracelsus for the orchestral work *Arcana*). These sounds for Varèse are the material point of connection to an immaterial world – at the same time intimate and extravagant, both a composer’s practical acoustical reality and living matter.

A central aspect of the idea of palimpsest is not just that the present is indebted to the past, but that it is also obligated to make its own imprint, to add another stratum to the overlay. In this way Luigi Dallapiccola’s *Piccola Musica Notturna* (1954) offers a lyrical and Italianate update of 12-tone composition. There is very little of the dry tables of prime and retrograde sets here. Dallapiccola’s version of “a little night music” is softer and intimate than its more famous namesake *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, more redolent of the small sounds of Bartók’s night music than anything from either of Vienna’s schools of compositional thought. The piece also shares a lot with *Déserts*: both were composed in 1954 and both connect a seemingly “scientific” methodology – in Dallapiccola’s case the strictures of the 12 tone system and in Varèse’s the new science of electronic music – to an overtly emotional, even mystical aura.

We are pleased to offer two new works on tonight’s concert. Katharina Rosenberger’s *Scatter*, in a newly orchestrated version, and a Nicholas Deyoe’s for someone else that it seems you’ve always wanted, a piece that Deyoe composed at our invitation for the *Déserts* instrumentation. As to the question of the role this new music might play in our larger project of palimpsest one can only say, perhaps by way of evading the question, that we may need some time to understand the relation of these newest layers to that which lies underneath. But I can’t help noting, even as fractured bits of melody swirl together and then spin apart in Katharina Rosenberger’s work, that there is a lyrical underpinning of noise that seems like an echo of Dallapiccola. And is it my imagination, or isn’t there something of Varèse’s pulsating geometries in Nicholas Deyoe’s piece?

On behalf of all of the musicians I would like to thank Jenn Stauffer for her formidable energy (and good humor) in organizing personnel and rehearsals for tonight’s concert.

-- *Steven Schick*



scatter (version 2010)

scatter is movement - a chase, a pursuit, a run in all directions, regrouping at times, then falling apart again, a split, splinters or sparks, dispersing or dissolving... these moments of agitation are depicted in three different segments that overlap and share similar material in ever-changing configurations. The listener could imagine looking through a kaleidoscope, turning and shaking the tube at various speeds, to observe the “action-patterns” collapse and reassemble to form new constellations and images. It is this interplay of contrasting formations that split up to the very high or to the very low and rumbling register, that temporally press ahead or stutteringly pull back the flow, which ultimately drive the music forward and reinforce the scattered evolution

for someone else that it seems you've always wanted

I want you to look at me with throbbing eyes
I want to watch me through you
and feel your tears of adoration
construct this image like a nude
air brush the rough edges
feel you painful longing
for someone else that it seems you've always wanted
there is a paradise under these clothes
a fairy tale waiting to be opened
I want to show you the cover
and snatch the book away.

- *Clinton McCallum*



2010 marks our 50th Anniversary.

We couldn't have
gotten here without you.

Thanks, San Diego.



Happy together for 50 years.

