

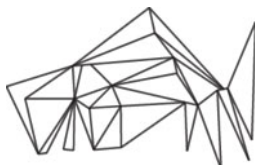
UC San Diego | Division of Arts and Humanities | Music

WEDNESDAYS@7 Presents

Explorative, Explanative, and Performative

Exploring Collaboration with
Anthony Burr, Roger Reynolds, and Jacob Sundstrom

Wednesday, January 30, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Music Center Experimental Theater



UC San Diego
ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Music

Toward Another World: LAMENT

- I. Innocence
- II. Awakening
- III. Resolve

with

Anthony Burr, Clarinet
Roger Reynolds, Composer
Jacob Sundstrom, Electronics

A question and answer session with the
audience will conclude this evening's program.

Some thoughts from the composer:

I have always been interested in collaborative projects. But in recent years, these engagements – with singers, instrumentalists, directors, dancers, even poets – have intensified in their degree of interactivity. I have realized increasingly that the degree of commitment, the time spent interactively, the mutual adjustments, the jousting over varying points of view all lead not only to occasional frustrations or mis-communications, but, more importantly, to spaces, terrains that it would have been impossible to enter were it not for the canopy of collaboration. It is the continual testing of one way instead of another, of proposals and counters that lead to the most rewarding outcomes.

I've now written duos for an instrumentalist and a computer musician involving: contrabass (Mark Dresser/Jaime Oliver: *MARKed MUSIC*), guitar (Pablo Gómez Cano/Jaime Oliver: *Dream Mirror*), violin (Irvine Arditti/Paul Hembree: *Shifting/Drifting*), and clarinet (Anthony Burr/Jacob Sundstrom: *Toward Another World: LAMENT*). *ACTIONS* (for pianist Eric Huebner and Jacob) is nearing completion.

Toward Another World: LAMENT originated as a portion of a larger project for Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic entitled *ILLUSION*. An interest in the surprising and illuminating relevance of ancient Greek tragedy to our contemporary travails had drawn me into a cycle of works. They arose out of the relationship of Agamemnon (prioritizing obligation to the state) and Clytemnestra (prioritizing domestic relationships), and in particular the fatal conflict that arose between them over the sacrifice of their young daughter, Iphigenia, an act that the gods assured him would serve to free the becalmed Greek fleet to sail against Troy.

The Greek tragedies often have a startling contemporaneity, but Euripides's treatment of Iphigenia, in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, struck me as differing significantly from what I would expect now. She is portrayed as passing through three stages that I used as the titles of the movements that make up *Towards Another World: LAMENT*. It is the last that surprises.

I. Innocence

II. Awakening

III. Resolve

A few phrases from the text underlying each movement will suggest their moods:

INNOCENCE

Iphigenia: O father, it is a good and
 Wonderful thing you have done – bringing me here!

 You say you are glad to see me
 But your eyes have no quiet in them.

Oh turn away from all of them
My father – be here and mine only, now!

Agamemnon: I am. Now I am nowhere but in this place,
And with you utterly, my darling.

AWAKENING

O my father –
If I had the tongue of Orpheus
So that I could charm with song the stones to
Leap and follow me ...
– I'd use
My magic now. But only with tears can I
Make arguments ...
O father, ... Do not take this life
Of mine before its dying time.

RESOLVE

It is wrong for me to love life too deeply. ...
Our country suffers, and so thousands
Of men arm themselves, thousand more in ships
Pick up their oars.
... but I with my one life
To save, am I to prevent all?
To Greece I give this body of mine. ...
These things coming to pass, Mother ... They will be
My children, my marriage, ...
My good name and my glory.

While the first two stages rang true, the idea that a contemporary young woman would place the interests of country above self, and do so in such a way as to find satisfaction in the nobility of her acceptance, felt less plausible.

In writing for the clarinet, I wanted to explore especially its extraordinary range of dynamic subtlety as well as its capacity for innocence, for reliable micro-tonal passage work, the use of higher partial components, the bending of held tones, the raw aggressiveness of which it is capable.

Having created a preliminary version of this design for *ILLUSION* (2005-6), I realized that it would be interesting to return to these schematic sketches and work with Anthony to explore ways of extending, varying, and deepening these materials on an expanded scale. His feedback was precious, demonstrating which extreme behaviors could be reliably

harnessed, which segments might be improvisatorially extended, which desired pitch bends were plausible, and so on.

Jacob and I have been collaborating on various projects for some time now. For this project, we recorded brief fragments in Anthony's performed realizations of passages from the developing score. These recordings were exactly optimized as "seeds" with quasi-genetic implications to be used in algorithmic extensions and elaborations. His excellent ear and thoughtful adjustments to the algorithms I had conceived created satisfying results. Our ultimate aim was to summon up a complementary circumstance where clarinetist and computer musician are fully aware of what they each can offer in a performance. But they can never precisely anticipate how their interactions will develop in a particular performance. So it is not only Anthony's performance which is "in the moment", but also Jacob's. The computer sounds, as those produced by the clarinet are, are in a state of constant interplay and adjustment.

- Roger Reynolds

Handwritten musical score with annotations and performance instructions. The score is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. It includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (pp, mp, p, f, ppp, pppp). The score is divided into measures, with some measures containing multiple notes. Annotations include circled numbers (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) and arrows pointing to specific parts of the score. Performance instructions are written in all caps and include:

- 7: SMEARZ, SUBITO MENO MOSSO
- 8: 5th PARTIAL, TENUOUS
- 9: MATRIX, 3rd & 5th PARTIALS PREDOMINATE, AGITATO
- 10: MATRIX, SMOOTH
- 11: SMEARZ
- 12: SMOOTH, SUBITO MENO MOSSO, BREATH PHRASE

Other annotations include "RANDOMLY ADD 3rd & 5th PARTIAL", "ARTICULATE SIMILAR MORDENTS", "WHILE MAINTAINING AGITATO CHARACTER, GRADUALLY REPLACE PITCH WITH BREATH SOUNDS", "EMPHASIZE SLUR CONTINUITY", "NO UPPER PARTIALS", "FREQ. UPPER PARTIALS", "AGITATO", "TENUOUS", "TENUOUS 5th PARTIAL", "EXTEND DESCENDING MICROTONAL ARTICULATION", "SIMILAR MORDENT", and "* ENOUGH FLICKERING PITCH TO ESTABLISH CONTOUR IDENTITY".

Thoughts from the clarinetist:

I frequently practice by improvising around the pieces that I am working on: not just coming up with variations and elaborations, but especially finding the cracks. The places where there could be more, where something else could happen. Or finding the moments that seem too short, or somehow unclear to me. These improvisations don't generally feel like me inserting myself in the piece or adding my commentary, but rather digging deeper to try to find out what was happening. To experiment with what it might be like to hear as someone else. The process of working on the development of this piece that Roger describes above, was then very familiar. In making the first set of recordings, I could magnify things in the score, tease them out speculatively, link them to families of related sounds, morph them into something else. We wound up with what I'd imagine was a pretty unwieldy collection of sounds. When the piece came back, then, it felt familiar.

The computer then takes a similar structural position in the final performance. There are still moments in the clarinet part that could go longer, could expand, point somewhere else entirely toward sounds that the clarinet cannot make, or at least one clarinetist cannot make. So the electronics make that happen. After being the vector for the original expansion, it's enjoyable to try to then shape the clarinet part in a way that makes it sound most like it's always on the verge of opening out further: into improvised interpolations, or morphing directly into the transformations of the computer part. To play in a sense to provoke the machine.

– Anthony Burr

Thoughts from a computer musician:

The clarinet and the computer have a symbiotic relationship in this work, both feeding off one another throughout the piece and throughout the collaborative process that bore the work. Roger and I spent hours (read: many hours) massaging the clarinet samples and the algorithmic treatment of its sounds to discover not only what worked compositionally, but also the hidden worlds inside the clarinet itself, latent potentials only revealed via electronic manipulation. This, I believe, lies close to the heart of electronic manipulation of acoustic instruments: extending, augmenting, and amplifying the natural capacities of an instrument.

Working with three algorithms – not of my design but of my making – one finds that the algorithms behave differently when they are given different instrumental “seeds,” even when the same instrument is played differently. Some algorithms respond very strongly to a particular instrumental character while others take much more massaging to give satisfactory results. In the case of the clarinet, the spectral treatment of sound produced by SMEARZ, for example, lends itself very well to its character. As you will hear, it creates exceedingly beautiful sonorities that extend the instruments' natural inclinations and create rippling harmonic reflections in an auditory sea within which the clarinet swims with or battles the currents. The computer, then, is not mere accompaniment: it helps shape the structure of the work, the pace of the movements, and the mood as Iphigenia becomes resolved to her fate.

– Jacob Sundstrom

About the Artists:

Roger Reynolds is known for his integration of diverse ideas and resources, for seamlessly blending traditional musical sounds and those now enabled by technology. His work responds to texts both poetic (Beckett, Ashbery) and mythological (Aeschylus, Euripides). In 1969, Reynolds returned to the US after seven years in Europe and Japan, taking up an appointment at UCSD, where he helped establish



the Music Department as a destination program. Reynolds won early recognition with Fulbright, Guggenheim, NEA, and National Institute of Arts and Letters Awards. In 1989, he won a Pulitzer Prize for the string orchestra composition, *Whispers Out of Time*. His nearly 100 compositions to date are published by Edition Peters USA; several dozen CDs and DVDs featuring his work have been released. He is author of three books and numerous articles. In 2009 he was appointed University Professor, the first Artist in the UC system. In 1998, the Library of Congress established a Special Collection of his work which is also included in the Paul Sacher Collection, Basel. He has held guest appointments at Harvard, Yale, Amherst, and CUNY.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/html/rreynolds/rreynolds-home.html>

Anthony Burr has worked across a broad spectrum of the contemporary musical landscape as clarinetist, composer and producer. Recent albums include a recording of Morton Feldman's *Clarinet and String Quartet* and *The Long Exhale*, a duo with pianist Anthony Pateras, that was selected as one of the top 10 modern classical releases of 2016 by *The Wire* magazine. Upcoming releases include the premiere recording of Alvin Lucier's *So You...* (Hermes, Orpheus, Eurydice), a disc of chamber music by Lucier and Feldman and an archive of duo material created with Icelandic bassist/composer Skuli Sverrisson. He is Associate Professor of Music at UCSD.

Although trained as a composer, **Jacob Sundstrom**'s work has branched out into several mediums and fields including new media, glitch, installation, and data-driven art. His work focuses on the friction between and among medium, performer(s), and process: using the process against the performers, the process against the medium, the medium against the performers, and *visa versa* and so on. Out of this friction arises fascinating, beautiful, and often surprising results.

Sundstrom's musical work has been performed by ensembles including Inverted Space, the JACK Quartet, and the Seattle Chamber Players. His visual work has been exhibited by the Center on Contemporary Art in Seattle, the San Diego Art Institute, the Daegu Art Factory, and he was a featured artist at the Georgetown Art Attack Special Events at CoCA Un[contained] at Equinox Studios. As a researcher, his work on EEG-driven musical interfaces has been published in *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* and presented at the Society for Neuroscience's annual meeting. Sundstrom studied music and philosophy at the University of California San Diego and music at the University of Washington. He is currently a PhD student in computer music at the University of California San Diego and enjoys going to bullfights on acid and Type II fun.

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David Espiritu - Theatrical Production Specialist