



San Francisco Tape Music Festival

Program 3

Saturday January 11th 2020

9:30pm, Victoria Theater

PROGRAM

Undercurrents (2016) Savannah Agger

Quatre machines pour sauver le monde (2019) Léa Boudreau

Vocalism A.I (1956) Toru Takemitsu

Listening understood as inhabiting (2015) Trond Lossius

- interval -

bay sky hills fog (2019) Kenneth Atchley

Eyes Draw Circles of Light (2019) Nicola Giannini

Stretch (2001) Bruce Bennett

Savannah Agger

Undercurrents (2016)

10m 8s

8 channels

A flow of layered sound streams. Hidden tendencies that move below the surface of what we easily perceive. *Undercurrents* found its form during my residency in Paris, November 2015. A special thank you to Das Elektronische Studio der Technischen Universität in Berlin and to Elektronmusikstudion (EMS) in Stockholm for support in creating this piece.

Savannah Agger (b. 1971) is a composer and performer from Sweden, living in Berlin. Her work includes music for rock bands, orchestra, choir, chamber ensembles, multichannel tape pieces, mixed music and interactive electronics. She has written concert pieces, music for theatre, and new music for circus and contemporary dance. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees in electroacoustic Composition at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm and holds a PhD in Musical Composition from the University of Birmingham, England, where she studied with Professor Jonty Harrison. Additional courses were taken at the European Course for Musical Composition and Technologies at Ircam, Paris, the Technical University, and the University of Arts and the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler Berlin. She has been a board member of The Swedish Electro Acoustic Society and is currently a board member of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Elektroakustische Musik.

Léa Boudreau

Quatre machines pour sauver le monde (2019)

12m 20s

stereo

In January 2019, students from Jean-Baptiste-Meilleur elementary school in Montréal took part in a little brainstorm: imagine fantastic machines under the theme *Quatre machines pour sauver le monde* (Four machines to save the world). No limit. No other instruction. All ideas were welcomed. Based on their suggestions, I composed this piece, expressing with sound and music the devices thought out by the youngsters but also their surrounding environment. The work is divided into four parts which respect the original titles given by the schoolchildren:

1) *Une machine volante qui fonctionne à la pollution et qui la transforme en air pur* (A flying machine that functions with pollution and turns it into fresh air)

2) *Une machine-robot en forme d'animal pour sauver les animaux qui n'ont pas de maison et qui sont dans la rue* (An animal-shaped robot-machine to save homeless animals that live on the street)

3) *Une machine pour envoyer toute la neige qui tombe ici au pôle Nord pour ne plus que ça fonde* (A machine to send all the snow falling here to the North Pole so it doesn't melt anymore)

4) *Une machine-bateau-sous-marin pour nettoyer les océans* (A machine-boat-submarine to clean the oceans)

Léa Boudreau is a composer, musician and sound artist based in Montréal. Now a final-year digital arts student, she has nourished a passionate relationship with sound since her teenage years. It was a time when she used to spend days as a hermit, listening and creating. Oh how few things have changed.

Nowadays, she continues to create with performance and composition in which she hopes to explore the infinite possibilities of everyday objects and to express the thousand of ideas she has kept in her mind for a long time now. In 2019, she won the 3rd place in SIME competition (International Electroacoustic Music Week, Lille University, April 2019) with her piece *Recovery*. She has received the Marcelle award 2019 from Université de Montréal music department for the work she accomplished during her academic journey. In 2017, she received the 3rd Hugh-Le Caine prize from the SOCAN Foundation Awards for Young Composers for her piece *Dementia*.

Toru Takemitsu

Vocalism A.I (1956)

4m 5s

stereo

Vocalism A.I was the first major electronic work by an East Asian composer, bringing Toru Takemitsu national fame in 1956. The piece is a collaboration between Takemitsu and the poet Shuntarō Tanikawa. Originally planned as a tape montage on the single Japanese word *ai* (love) lasting seventy-two hours, the final version is only four minutes, making it (in Takemitsu's words) Tanikawa's "shortest and longest love-poem." The two phonemes of the Japanese word alone provide all the basic sound-material for the work, recited in various ways – sung, spoken, whispered, groaned, etc. – by a male and female speaker.

Despite Akiyama's assertion that the work's title refers not only to "the love that flows in the veins of lovers" but also to "the love of which small birds sing...love such as that revealed in the inside of stones," the overriding impression gained from this male-female dialog is nevertheless often the very literal one of a certain playful eroticism. It was this eroticism that offended Pooh-Bahs at NHK, Japan's National Radio, who not only banned broadcasts of *Vocalism A.I* but publicly denounced Takemitsu as immoral. However, rather than condemn him in the public eye, this piqued national curiosity. Japan Victor included the work in their tribute album, and RCA Victor (JVC's stateside affiliate) released it on a budget-priced Victrola stereodisc.

Toru Takemitsu (1930 - 1996) was a Japanese composer and writer on aesthetics and music theory. Largely self-taught, Takemitsu possessed consummate skill in the subtle manipulation of instrumental and orchestral timbre. He is famed for combining elements of oriental and occidental philosophy to create a sound uniquely his own, and for fusing opposites together such as sound

with silence and tradition with innovation. He composed several hundred independent works of music, scored more than ninety films and published twenty books. He was also a founding member of the *Jikken Kobo* (experimental workshop) in Japan, a group of avant-garde artists who distanced themselves from academia. Their collaborative work is often regarded among the most influential of the 20th century. Takemitsu is considered one of the leading 20th-century Japanese composers, receiving numerous awards and honours.

Trond Lossius

Listening understood as inhabiting (2015)

18m 9s

ambisonics

My friend Jeremy Welsh and I often travel to the suburbs and rural areas in Western Norway. He brings a video camera, and I take along recording equipment. We use the resulting material in a series of audio-visual installations. The impression that these places leave often differs between sound and image. The eye experiences scenic fjords. Nature and weather dominate, in spite of power lines, roads and buildings along the fiord. The field recordings testify as to how these places are now domesticated: human activities, machines, traffic, electricity, helicopters and passing airplanes dominate the soundscapes.

This work starts with a series of field recordings from Western Norway and beyond. Some recordings are further processed and abstracted, and other layers added. The result is a psychogeographic reading of these places. In this composition I want to create a sequence of places, fields and textures that we can listen to and inhabit. I hope this active listening will continue after the concert, as we re-enter our everyday lives and surroundings.

Trond Lossius is a sound and installation artist based in Bergen, Norway. He investigates relationships between sound and place. His primary interest as a field recordist is to listen to and capture the sound of the suburbs. Using an ambisonic microphone, he records places rather than sounds. Suburb soundscapes reveal anthropocene environments with no distinction between nature and culture. In his audio-visual installations, surround sound becomes an invisible and temporal sculptural medium. With Jon Arne Mogstad and Jeremy Welsh, he has done installations that combine paintings, video, prints, and sound. He has also worked with the contemporary performance group Verdensteatret, winner of New York Dance and Performance Awards (The Bessies.) When needed, he develops

custom software for use in his projects. This includes a port of the Ambisonic Toolkit to Reaper. Trond Lossius has a master in geophysics, studied composition at The Grieg Academy, and has been a research fellow in the arts at Bergen National Academy of the Arts. He has been Head of Research at Oslo National Academy of the Arts, and professor at The Grieg Academy and the Bergen National Academy of the Arts. He supervises PhD students at several institutions in Norway and Sweden.

Kenneth Atchley

bay sky hills fog (2019)

12m 42s

stereo

bay sky hills fog is a generative, twelve-tone, work inspired by my aesthetic and emotional observations and responses to the energetically textured, layered terrain of the Bay Area veiled in fog. Timbral shadows of a floating orchestra, synthesized textures, and digitally enhanced spectra sculpt overlapping melodies, static planes of sound, and dissonant climaxes: an illusion of form, a suggestion of transitional states of clearing and concealment.

Kenneth Atchley composes and performs electronic music: pure-tone and noise hymns; richly harmonic, distortion-studded, electroacoustic devotionals; feedback serenades. Kenneth's sound and video work are infused with themes of the ephemeral and transitory nature of being, states of absorption, the effects of imagination on the perception of reality. His sound performances and digital image works have been featured in US and international venues. Recent projects include newly composed solo works for analog and digital electronics, songs with The Atchleys, and Atchley Heglin Trio. His recorded works and collaborations have appeared on CD and streaming media. His interpretive scores, libretti, and articles have been published in books and journals in the US and Europe.

Kenneth's early work with tape and electronics were inspired by 20th Century electronic music and recording effects and artifacts (edits, reverb, tape manipulation, and noise found deep in the grooves) of pop music. He pursued the study and practice of electronic music at Mills College where he studied with Robert Ashley and David Behrman.

Nicola Giannini

Eyes Draw Circles of Light (2019)

9m 20s

8 channels

Text: Elisabetta Porcinai, Alice Nardi

Voice: Elisabetta Porcinai

Eyes Draw Circles Of Light aims to explore specific aspects of the human unconscious, characterized by that brief time when we are about to sleep. Through sound spatialization, I wanted to create a multidimensional unconscious representation, evoking the relationship between psyche and body. I underlined those fast, involuntary body movements, hypnic jerks, that may occur at that time. The piece is also inspired by the concept of tensegrity, or tensional integrity, a principle borrowed from architecture, based on the use of discrete elements inserted into a network and subjected to compressive forces. It's a tension that can recall human body behaviors in the pre-sleep phase. The work aims to evoke this tensional integrity, trying to find a balance between elegance and experimentation, femininity and masculinity, also reflecting the intergender nature of the composition. The piece is a collaborative work between me and the two Italian artists Elisabetta Porcinai and Alice Nardi, who wrote a poem for the piece. The text was interpreted by Elisabetta and then re-elaborated by me as part of the composition.

Nicola Giannini is a sound artist and electroacoustic music composer whose practice focuses on acousmatic and live immersive music. He is interested in sounds that evoke physical materials and living organisms. His music has been performed in the USA, Canada, United Kingdom, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Sweden and Italy. His acousmatic piece *For Hannah* was chosen as a finalist at the International composition competition Città di Udine 2018. His piece *Eyes Draw Circles of Light* received an honorable mention at the Destellos Composition Competition. Nicola has a master's

degree in Electroacoustic Composition from the Conservatory of Florence. Currently, he is a doctoral student at Université de Montréal under the supervision of the Professor and Composer Robert Normandeau.

Bruce Bennett

Stretch (2001)

18m 24s

stereo

Stretch is a sonic exploration of time stretching. It uses several very short samples of gongs, cymbals, tampura, shakuhachi, beluga whales, and so forth, and stretches them as much as 164 times their original duration. This creates an extraordinarily rich and dense texture of sound, revealing the vast sonic world contained within sounds that normally pass too quickly to be heard in such detail. The composition unfolds in several waves, creating a large-scale arch form.

Bruce Bennett (b. 1968) is a San Francisco-based composer and performer. His compositions have been played throughout the United States and abroad by such groups as the Arditti String Quartet, the Avenue Winds, the Berkeley Symphony, the CityWinds, the Del Sol String Quartet, Earplay, the Ensemble InterContemporain, the Kairos Quartet, the New Orleans New Music Ensemble, the Oregon Bach Festival, the Paragon Brass Quintet, Sirius, and performers such as Brian Connelly, Tom Dambly, Helen Gillet, Matt Ingalls, Jerry Kuderna, Alexandra Kocheva, Hugh Livingston, Lee Nolan, Gary Scavone, and Michael Zbyszynski. His electroacoustic music has been presented at curated events such as the Electric Rainbow Coalition Festival at Dartmouth, Natural Disasters exhibit in New Orleans, the Pulse Field exhibition in Atlanta, the Electronic Music Midwest Festival, Sonic Circuits II, Cultural Labyrinth in San Francisco, EX-STATIC and Sonic Residues in Melbourne, Australia, and at ICMA, SEAMUS, and SCI conferences. He has received several honors, including the Prix Maurice Ravel at Fontainebleau, a commission from the Fromm Foundation, and grants from Meet the Composer and the American Composers Forum.



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Please join us for the remaining festival concert

Sunday January 12 7pm

- a special 3-set concert of works for instruments and fixed media -

Mario Davidovsky :: Matt Ingalls/sfSoundGroup
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