

San Francisco Tape Music Festival
Program Notes for Saturday, January 31, 2009

Visit <http://sfSound.org/tape> for links to more information about the composers and their work.

Felipe Otondo :: *Ciguri* [2008 - 9:30 - stereo]

Ciguri was developed using part of the music for the dance theatre piece *To have done with the judgment of Artaud* commissioned by Base Theatre for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2007. The composition is inspired in the writings of Antonin Artaud among the Tarahumara Indians in Mexico and is structured as different states of intensity stemming from the ritual of the peyote. The piece explores the inharmonic timbral character of different types of bell sounds blended and contrasted in an expanding and contracting time framework that varies from rhythms to textures of irregular sounds. *Ciguri* received the first prize in the 2008 Città di Udine composition competition in Italy.

Felipe Otondo was born in 1972 in Santiago, Chile, studied acoustics in Chile and perception of sound in Denmark, where he worked several years as a researcher in the field of musical acoustics and computer music. He studied composition with the Danish composer Anders Brødsgaard and has done mostly electroacoustic music, music for theatre and dance, interactive works as well as sound installations. His music has been played in festivals in Europe, Asia and the Americas. He completed a PhD in composition at the University of York with Ambrose Field and Roger Marsh as tutors and was recently appointed lecturer at the Lancaster Institute of Contemporary Arts of Lancaster University in the United Kingdom.

George Cremaschi :: *Winter Light (for Ingmar Bergman)* [2008 - 7:54 - stereo]

Winter Light was originally inspired by Lance Grabmiller's invitation for contributions towards a Praemedia compilation tribute to Ingmar Bergman in the wake of his 2007 death. As it so happened, the main structure of the piece was devised on a long train ride across a frozen, wintry Sweden on the way to play a concert at a film festival. It was later finished in Amsterdam, and used in a contemporary dance project. All of the sounds were produced on two oscillators, and minimally processed.

George Cremaschi was born in New York City and studied music and composition there. He has played with, and written for, dancers, installation artists, improvisers, rock bands, poets, film, folk musicians, theater groups, contemporary music ensembles and pop divas. His work appears on over 30 recordings on the Apestaartje, Evolving Ear, Emanem, Black Saint, Leo, Beak Doctor, Evander, Rastascan, Music & Arts, Nine Winds and 482 Music labels. He currently lives in Tábor, Czech Republic, where he is a curator and administrator at CESTA, an international arts center.

Goran Vejvoda :: *Pre-fader: Highly reverberant states* [2008 - 7:07 - 4 channels]

Hearing as a blurred media, non localizable sources, suspended emotions, undecided feelings, a dark fleeing sense of space, entwined monochromatic tones, a whole reverberated palette acoustically malleable, without beginning nor end. Make the ears believe; confusion between imaginary dream like and real events. Trying to reach a certain state or point rather than listening to a composition; then getting involved in a fuzzy - can't really put your finger on it - distant/somewhere out there environment.

Goran Vejvoda is a composer and visual artist dealing with modularity and mainly working in sound-related areas. "Capture a square of silence, release a circle of sound" constitutes one of his paradigms. His concerns are a span across various domains including: psychoacoustic phenomena, silence, the origin and disappearance of sounds, their invisibles traces, their socio-political implications, non-emotional listening, the state of electro-acoustic music, future sounds, the process and the final product, the compression generation, the headphones culture, broadcasting...

GV is also interested in the nature and the deep meaning of sound, its modes of representation, dissemination and cross pollination in various fields including, contemporary dance, cultural hybrids, internet, cinema, the media and its visualisation-materialization forms within contemporary art, questioning the numerous points of reference and its permutations.

He never hesitates to question other areas, including the decline of the medium, leftovers of the cultural feast, artificiality, demagoguery, process, democratization of the creative act, science, economic and society models, the richness of artistic proposals, evolutionary phenomena, media-arts, words & languages, cybernetics, lateral-transversality-interactivity, the notion of sustainability within the arts, outer space thinking, taste and the obsolescence of artistic currents...

With his 'modular' unit, - Background -, he creates interdisciplinary performances making use of new technologies, dance, happening or fashion... The principle of adaptability, surprise and indeterminacy rules these events.

He has been developing an idiosyncratic body of work in the shape of concerts, exhibitions, records, writing, video, print, photography... Multiple reflections, on these varied fields, produce diverse final products, from the concrete object to the immaterial. He also teaches sound practices and runs workshops.

Jon Leidecker/Wobbly :: *Chart Tempo & World Retrograde* [2009 - 4:33 - 4 channels]

One of the lost artifacts of the 70's is the *History of Rock and Roll Timesweep*, produced by the Drake-Chenault corporation which, for better or worse, was a pioneering company in the automation of radio station playlists. The *Timesweep* was an extended montage featuring three to ten seconds of every song that hit the top of the U.S. pop charts from 1956 to 1981, presented in strict chronological order. Heard in annual syndication on several hundred U.S. radio stations in the late 70's and early 80's, but by its very nature commercially unreleasable, the project faded from wide circulation over the next two decades. During this time, Professor Hugo Keesing quietly extended the project's range through the 90's for his "Popular Music in American Society" class at the University of Maryland. It was a cassette bootleg of Keesing's *Chartsweep* which finally found wide distribution online through Mark Gunderson's Evolution Control Committee website.

In *Chartsweep*, a listener can hear the continuum of nearly four decades worth of inescapable number one hits in just under 75 minutes, a nearly overwhelming experience that even on repeat plays exposes you to more than you were aware you were even capable of forgetting, let alone remembering. Though the melodies are distinctive, it is the evolving production style -- the actual sounds engineered and chosen by each era of the industry -- which form the essence of the narrative. Dropping the cursor at random within *Chartsweep*, a listener knows exactly which part of which decade they are in, often before they can name the actual song.

How does one go about hearing this same musical narrative freed from any regressive dependence on melody? One thing notable when listening to the songs which cleared every industrial obstacle to possess the top spot is the number of power ballads, the least distinctive and most homogenous structure of them all. Moving to the songs that just missed the top spot provides a drastically wider range of pure sounds, as well as less instantly identifiable works that are still a part of the same story. By moving to

the songs that topped out at #2 or #3, as well as scaling back the time threshold to less than 1-2 seconds for each song, the same narrative is presented more concisely and without as heavy a dependence on direct reference. When the narrative reaches 2002, the cavalcade of Western pop cuts short to expand to an avalanche of recordings of World Music, Chart, Ethnological and simulated, moving from 2002 backwards through time, inaccurately skipping through reconstructed centuries. The pop charts have of course continued to move forwards, but the West is increasingly waking up to the rest of the world out of necessity.

An earlier version of this piece simply presented the songs in chronological order, letting the internal rhythms of the short fragments form a random complex of beats. As an experiment, or more accurately a joke (as well as a tip of the hat to the slowly ascending tempo of John Oswald's "Plexure"), a new strict-tempo version was created. Each version suggests things missing in the other. The dance mix is the version being presented tonight.

Wobbly began as an improvised live mix radio program in Santa Barbara In 1990 and since 1994 has become the unintentional pseudonym of Jon Leidecker. Live performances are still laptop free and aim for extended narratives spun from spontaneous yet coherent multi-sample polyphony. Selected recent albums are freely available online. Previous and ongoing collaborators include Thomas Dimuzio, People Like Us, Matmos, Anne McGuire, Negativland, Tim Perkis, Xopher Davidson, Blevin Blectum, Lesser, Otomo Yoshihide, Zeena Parkins & MaryClare Brzytwa.

Maggi Payne :: *Arctic Winds* [2007 - 9:52 - stereo]

Arctic Winds transports me to the Arctic (where I've never been, but dream of). The piece is sparse, with occasional frantic "windstorms" stirring up the vast frozen expanse. Everything is suspended, in near silence, with occasional forays dropping low into blasts of "wind." Each sound is crystallized, exaggerated, as in our dreams.

The primary sound sources are dry ice and several sizes of ball bearings rolling across a variety of drumheads, attached and unattached. I started working on this piece when I had a 102 degree temperature coupled with chills for three days. I suspect that experiencing those internal extremes conjured up those beautiful arctic dreams and this somewhat over-the-top, playful piece.

Maggi Payne is Co-director of the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College, in the San Francisco Bay Area (USA) where she teaches recording engineering, composition, and electronic music. She also freelances as a recording engineer/editor and historical remastering engineer.

She has had performances of her works throughout the Americas, Europe, Japan, and Australasia, has received two Composer's Grants and an Interdisciplinary Arts Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and video grants from the Mellon Foundation and the Western States Regional Media Arts Fellowships Program, and has received four honorary mentions from Bourges and one from Prix Ars Electronica.

Her works are available on Starkland, Lovely Music, Music and Arts, Centaur, Ubuibi, MMC, CRI, Digital Narcis, Frog Peak, Asphodel, and/OAR, Ubuibi, and Mills College labels.

John R. Pierce :: *Stochatta* [1959 - 0:37 - mono]

Stochatta is a very short and sweet tune from the early experiments in computer synthesized music at Bell Laboratories in Murray Hill, New Jersey. According to Pierce its tunefulness and clear pitch centers are "intended as a contrast to Newman Guttman's 'Pitch Variations'", another early Bell Labs example which plays with pitch ambiguities.

John Pierce (1910–2002), was an American engineer and author. He worked extensively in the fields of radio communication, microwave technology, computer music, psychoacoustics, and science fiction. He wrote on electronics and information theory, and developed jointly the concept of Pulse code modulation (PCM) with his Bell Labs colleagues Barney Oliver and Claude Shannon. He supervised the Bell Labs team which built the first transistor, and at the request of one of them, Walter Brattain, coined the term transistor.

Pierce's early work at Bell Labs was on vacuum tubes of all sorts. He did significant research into satellites, including an important leadership role (as vice President of Bell Laboratories for Research) in the development of the first commercial communications satellite, Telstar 1. After leaving Bell Laboratories, he joined Caltech as a professor of electrical engineering in 1970. Shortly thereafter, he also took the position of Chief Engineer at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

In 1980 he retired from Caltech and moved to his final position at Stanford's CCRMA. Here he was prominent in the research of computer music, as a Visiting Professor of Music, Emeritus (along with John Chowning and Max Mathews). It was at Stanford that he became an independent co-discoverer of the non-octave musical scale that he later named the Bohlen-Pierce scale.

Kent Jolly :: *Whistle* [2009 - 6:00 - 16 channels]

Whistle is a 16 channel piece built around the idea of performing each track separately, and in seclusion from each other. Each track is placed in a single speaker, and each tracks performance was done with the same shape/form in mind. There was later editing and additions, but that idea was the overall guide for the composition of the piece.

Kent Jolly (Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, 1970) studied electronic music at the Art Institute of Chicago (BFA 1994) and Mills College in Oakland (MFA 1996). He is a founding member of the San Francisco Tape Music Collective and has created numerous works for tape, including *Mirrors* (1994), *Holding Pattern* (1998), *Cymbal* (2001), *Bellbox* (2003), and *Sleep Walker* (2007). He currently is employed as an Audio Director for Maxis/Electronic Arts, working on the popular video games *Sim City*, *The Sims* and *Spore*. He lives in Berkeley, California.

Luciano Berio :: *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* [1958 - 8:12 - stereo]

Luciano Berio's *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* is known to be one of the classic pieces of early tape music from the 1950's. Composed in 1958 at his own *Studio di Fonologia*, *Thema* still sounds surprisingly fresh, and has continued to be an influence on tape music composers over the last 50 years. The piece consists entirely of tape manipulations of Cathy Berberian reading the opening "overture" text from the "Sirens" chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Berio was especially interested in exploring new relationships between text and music, and in *Thema*, his goal was to transform the poetry of Joyce's text into a more musical context. What is so easily done now with digital sampling technology -- mixing, reordering, changing speed/pitch, reversing, etc -- was a fairly laborious task in the days when Berio and his assistants created this work on electromagnetic tape. Even more phenomenal is that the piece transcends its technical details to create a beautiful work of art! It is unclear to us if Berberian's unmanipulated reading was intended to be heard at the beginning of the piece in live performance -- we include it here.

Luciano Berio (1925-2003) was one of the most important composers and musical thinkers of the second half of the 20th century. A major force in the development of post-war new music, he produced a body of works that embraced a wide range of interests, genres and techniques. He is known for his virtuosic *Sequenzas* for solo instruments, his orchestral compositions, his early involvement in electronic music, and most importantly, his exploration and expansion of the musical and theatrical possibilities of the human voice. He was extremely interested in re-examining the music of the past, and transcribed many works by composers from Monteverdi to Mahler, as well as reconstructing several unfinished works. In addition, he often used material and quotations of other works (from others as well as himself) in his own compositions, predating the "sampler era" by many decades.

Zhiye Li :: *Dimanche Détendu* [2008 - 5:16 - stereo]

Dimanche Détendu is a soundscape piece. Most of the sound materials were recorded at the French Quarter of New Orleans. This piece intends to project a picture about the relaxed and easeful life style in the deep south.

Zhiye Li is currently a M.A. student in the Music Science and Technology Program at Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. He received M.S. and B.S. degrees both on Electrical Engineering from Fudan University of China before he came to Tulane. He always likes creating new music and making "noise". His pieces have been played at various concerts.

Cliff Caruthers :: *Cupido's Suitcase* [2009 - 6:50 - stereo]

Cupido's Suitcase - Someone is walking along the beach.. Someone is packing their things. Someone has a story to tell, but the theater is dark. Real life and fantasy mix; she lies to herself, dreams nightly of a suitcase she can live in, and always forgets by morning.

Cliff Caruthers has been composing electroacoustic and experimental music since 1995. He continues to search for direct and tangible relationships to complex technologies, creating narrative soundscapes and psychologically charged atmospheres from recordings of real and imagined environs. His work has been featured at the Society for Electroacoustic Music in the United States (SEAMUS), the San Francisco Electronic Music Festival, The San Francisco Tape Music Festival, Deep Wireless 2006, Noise Pancakes, Quiet American's Field Effects series, and the Prague Quadrennial 2007. Since moving to Oakland in 2000, Mr. Caruthers has established himself as a preeminent sound designer in the Bay Area, working with Berkeley Repertory Theater, Cutting Ball Theater (associate artist), American Conservatory Theater, Aurora Theatre Company, Crowded Fire (company member), San Jose Stage Company, Marin Theatre Company, California Shakespeare Theater, and as resident sound designer at Theatreworks. He is also pleased to be a part of the San Francisco Tape Music Collective.

The Fireman (aka Paul McCartney and Youth) :: *Untitled* [2008 - 3:00 - stereo]

An embedded track on the most recent release from The Fireman called *Electric Arguments*. Each track on this collection was conceived and recorded in a single day. The duo borrowed the album title from the poem *Kansas City to St. Louis* by Allen Ginsberg. Ginsberg describes driving along the highway in a "white Volkswagen" (i.e., a "beetle") while listening to music and call-in shows on the radio and looking at signs and billboards: "Michelle, John Lennon & Paul McCartney / wooing the decade / gaps from the 30s returned / Old earth rolling mile after mile patient / The ground / I roll on / the ground / the music soars above / The ground electric arguments / ray over / The ground dotted with signs for Dave's Eat Eat".

The Fireman is the moniker given to electronic music experiments created by Paul McCartney and Martin Glover (also known as Youth).

Geraud Bec :: buzzz [2008 - 6:30 - stereo]

BUZZZ

Dreadful postmodern sound colour

Printed circuit : predefined copper conductor.

Electric shocks ; short circuit : the free electron thinking.

Jack plugged in, ruling connection ; nude patch : lost connection.

Uninvited yodde, bugged accordion buffer, deteriorated music : burnt motherboard.

Critical static fullness, the free electron is travelling willingly.

Against the current : revolt of the voltage, intensity of the insurrection.

6 billions ohm resistor : cathartic chaos.

But Tabula Rasa does not exist : bounded electronic landscape, mass conditioning.

Mediation, Regulation, Automation, Mechanization, Normalization,

Standardization, Systematisation : one-dimensionality.

Loves, machines, computers, lines and wires

[10 00 11 00 01], [00 10 00 10 00],

Man, his execution.

Countdown,

Zero.

Born in 1981 in Aurillac (France), **Géraud Bec** has always been fascinated by certain types of music in which sound has a particular importance. As Cinema is also a sound art, he decides to begin a professional training in sound engineering and he wins the second prize in a radiophonic contest for his work entitled First Spring – a short radiophonic poem (Radio France). He has been following Nicolas Vérin's electro-acoustic class at the Evry Conservatoire for the last two years, and his first compositions are performed in several contemporary music festivals.