

**MONDAY
EVENING
CONCERTS**

NEW VOICES IV:
YARN/WIRE
UNTITLED SCHOOL

January 8, 2018 | 8:00 PM
Zipper Concert Hall

MONDAY EVENING CONCERTS JANUARY 8, 2018

New Voices IV: Yarn/Wire - Untitled School

Thomas Meadowcroft - ***Walkman Antiquarian*** (ensemble and electronics) (2013) [15'] West Coast Premiere

Johannes Kreidler - ***Scanner Studies*** (video) (2012) [5'] West Coast premiere

Catherine Lamb - ***Curvo Totalitas*** (ensemble and electronics) (2016) [20'] West Coast premiere

intermission

Johannes Kreidler - ***Scanner Studies 2*** (video) (2012) [5'] West Coast premiere

Øyvind Torvund - ***Untitled School*** (ensemble, video and electronics) (2014) [30'] West Coast Premiere

Untitled School No. 1 (scales)

Untitled School No. 2 (textures)

Untitled School No. 3 (chords/textures)

Untitled School No. 4 (imitations)

Untitled School No. 5 (jungles)

Mudjam

Campfire Tunes

Yarn/Wire

Laura Barger, piano

Ning Yu, piano

Ian Antonio, percussion

Russell Greenberg, percussion

This concert is made possible, in part, by a grant from the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs.

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PROGRAM NOTES by Paul Griffiths

Thomas Meadowcroft (b. 1972) - *Walkman Antiquarian*

Australian by birth, Thomas Meadowcroft has been based for the last twenty years in Berlin. It is the resulting distance of the country of his birth – and simultaneously its immediate electronic presence, by way of cellphone and talkback radio – that informs several of his recent projects. Among these are creative mockumentaries commissioned by radio authorities in Germany (*Song Buslines*, 2013, evoking bus journeys along the Australian east coast) and Australia (*Moving Homes*, 2016, imagining a catastrophic cyclone hitting the same region), as well as pieces for concert performance. Common features, that speak of distance and presence, include pre-existing sources (found musical objects) as well as electronically treated sound alongside live.

"Stated briefly," he has said, "*Walkman Antiquarian* juxtaposes two technologies, the grand piano and the 24-key plastic sampler. The samples were taken from cassette tape recordings of my father's record collection which were sent through a series of gating devices and tape machines in the studio, prior to performance. The samples are then distributed to five speakers spread across the ensemble, informing individual players when and what to play live."

The means are even more disparate than this brief note can convey. While the piano is hooked on loops that might suggest a lounge pianist in the small hours, the percussionists have recourse to a range of instruments, both regular (snare drum, bass drum, suspended cymbal, glockenspiel, etc.) and irregular (for example, a small Indian bell and a tree branch). One of the percussionists has access to a turntable rotating at 33 r.p.m., which provides not only a visual reminder of the LP sources but also a rhythmic one, when objects on the turntable are struck or handled. As for the sound on those LPs, this comes through in distorted snatches, which – besides being used to cue the musicians – may activate the instruments on which speakers are placed (piano, bass drum) or, in the case of a speaker with its covering removed, stimulate movement and sound from wooden beads poured on to it.

Memory is coming to us from several angles and at different removes, in a form that proceeds with the necessity of a ritual.

Catherine Lamb (b. 1982) - *Curvo Totalitas*

In this piece conceived in 2016 for Yarn/Wire, Catherine Lamb has the percussionists playing a tam tam and a steel sheet while the pianists perform on electronic keyboards, projecting filtered partials from continuous rolls that have been pre-recorded by the percussionists on their instruments. Harmonies are brought forward and accumulated, long melodies discovered. The effect is of scanning geometries in a thundercloud.

To quote the composer: "The piece defines intercepting curvatures in the harmonic space created by a tam-tam, a steel sheet, and their parallel synthesis played by two keyboardists. The synthesis is shaped by direct and close filtering of the two percussion instruments into two overlapping overtone arrays. Through this tonal palette there is an attempt to highlight movements and pathways within chaotic space resonating. Where they intersect and interact might expand and define the overall form unfolding in the room."

Øyvind Torvund (b. 1976) - *Untitled School/Mud Jam/Campfire Tunes*

Øyvind Torvund was here six years ago with fellow Norwegians, the group Asamisimasa. He returns now with another group of works that deftly bring together the sounds of standard instruments (pianos, guitar, a large cymbal), non-standard ones (whistles, ocarina, harmonicas), home-made apparatus, household objects (a milk steamer and a plastic bottle) and samples – together, in the first piece, *Untitled School*, with another layer in the form of projections. These, of course, add experiences of a different kind, but they are also neatly – and humorously – integrated into the music. Not only do they provide visual corollaries for the musical gestures, they also, returning often in different contexts, invite a musical kind of attention. We begin to think about how a certain image relates in different ways to different sonic patterns, or how different images respond to different aspects of the same sound event.

There are five sections, which the projections also identify. First comes "Scales," made of upward arpeggios that are all similar but not identical, interspersed with other material including twinkling broken chords and downward scales, as promised. "Textures" is made of staccato notes on the pianos in the shadow of sampled sounds, and again there is similarity but difference all through. "Chords" has features from both predecessors, along with, indeed, crashing chords and passages of rapid iteration. "Imitations" pays homage in turn to Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, Liszt's *Faust Symphony*, Strauss's *Don Quixote*, Ravel's *Ma Mère l'oye* and Scriabin's *Poème d'extase*. "Jungles" has appropriate noises both recorded and simulated, along with a chord sequence on guitar and other additions.

The lights then go out for *Mud Jam*, which the players perform on their home-made string instruments in the far corners of the hall in total darkness. *Campfire Tunes* returns to the conditions of *Untitled School* to add a coda of scintillant and resonant sonorities in the deep time of live mixed with recorded sounds.

Program notes © Paul Griffiths. Paul Griffiths is an acclaimed writer on contemporary and classical music whose books include *A Concise History of Western Music* and *The Penguin Companion to Classical Music*. He is also known as a librettist (Elliott Carter's *What Next?*) and novelist. In 2002, Griffiths was honored by the French government as a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

BIOGRAPHIES

Yarn/Wire is a New York-based percussion and piano quartet (Ian Antonio and Russell Greenberg, percussion / Laura Barger and Ning Yu, pianos). Noted for its "spellbinding virtuosity" (TimeOut NY) and "mesmerizing" performances (New York Times) the ensemble is admired for the energy and precision it brings to performances of today's most adventurous music.

Founded in 2005, Yarn/Wire is dedicated to expanding the repertoire written for its instrumentation, through commissions and collaborative initiatives that aim to build a new and lasting body of work. Influenced by its members' experiences with classical music, avant-garde theatre, and rock music, the ensemble champions a varied and probing repertoire. In 2016, the ensemble won first prize in the open category as part of the inaugural M-Prize competition at the University of Michigan. More recently, it has been honored by Stony Brook University as one of its "40 under 40" alumni who are leaders in their field.

Yarn/Wire has commissioned many American and international composers including Raphael Cendo, Zosha Di Castri, Peter Evans, Michael Gordon, George Lewis, Alex Mincek, Misato Mochizuki, Tristan Murail, Enno Poppe, Sam Pluta, and Kate Soper, while giving US premieres of works by many others including Stefano Gervasoni and Georg Friedrich Haas. The ensemble also enjoys collaborations with genre-bending artists such as Tristan Perich, David Bithell, Sufjan Stevens, and Pete Swanson. Yarn/Wire has recorded for the WERGO, Distributed Objects, Populist, and Carrier record labels in addition to maintaining their own imprint.

Yarn/Wire appears internationally at prominent festivals and venues including the Lincoln Center Festival, BAM, New York's Miller Theatre, The Kitchen, Ultima Festival Oslo, Rainy Days (Luxembourg), Transit (Leuven), River-to-River Festival, La MaMa Theatre, London's Barbican Centre, the Edinburgh International Festival, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra Hall, and Hong Kong New Music Ensemble's Modern Academy. Their ongoing series, Yarn/Wire/Currents, serves as an incubator for new experimental music in collaboration with the Blank Forms presenting organization. Through these and other activities, including educational residencies and other outreach programs, Yarn/Wire works to promote new music in the United States. For more information, please visit: yarnwire.org

Catherine Lamb (b. 1982, Olympia, Wa, U.S.), is a composer exploring the interaction of elemental tonal material and the variations in presence between shades and beings in a room. She has been studying and composing music since a young age. In 2003 she turned away from the conservatory in an attempt to understand the structures and intonations within Hindustani Classical Music, later finding Mani Kaul in 2006 who was directly connected to Zia Mohiuddin Dagar and whose philosophical approach to sound became important to her. She studied (experimental) composition at the California Institute of the Arts (2004-2006) under James Tenney and Michael Pisaro, who were both integral influences. It was there also that she began her work into the area of Just Intonation, which became a clear way to investigate the interaction of tones and ever-fluctuating shades, where these interactions in and of them-selves became structural elements in her work. Since then she has written various ensemble pieces (at times with liminal electronic portions) and continues to go further into elemental territories, through various kinds of research, collaboration, and practice (herself as a violist). She received her MFA from the Milton Avery School of Fine Arts at Bard College in 2012 and is currently residing in Berlin, Germany.

Johannes Kreidler (b. 1980) studied from 2000 to 2006 at the Musikhochschule in Freiburg, Germany where teachers included Mathias Spahlinger (composition), Mesias Manguashca and Orm Finnendahl (electronic music), and Eckehard Kiem (music theory). During this time he was also a Fellow of the European Union from 2004 to 2005 and a visiting student at the Institute of Sonology at the Koninklijk Conservatorium at The Hague in the Netherlands. He also attended seminars in philosophy and art history at the University of Freiburg.

Since 2006 he has taught music theory, ear training, composition and electronic music in Germany at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Rostock, in the advanced training division of the Musikhochschule Detmold, at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover, and, since 2013, at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg.

Johannes Kreidler lives in Berlin. His work is described as conceptual music and usually employs multimedial elements.

Thomas Meadowcroft (b. 1972) is an Australian freelance composer and musician living in Berlin, where he has been based since 1998. His music has been described as 'reaching an inexpressible purity' (Le Monde), 'nerve torture' (Süddeutsche Zeitung) and 'dreamy post-rock' (New York Times). His work involves notated compositions for acoustic instruments and electronics, performance and improvisation in various musical contexts, sound installations, as well as music for theatre and film.

Alongside regular musical studies in Oslo and Berlin, the Norwegian composer **Øyvind Torvund** played guitar in rock and improvising groups, and his music assembles disparate materials, inconsistent attitude: sounds from rock or from everyday life (or nature) occurring in chamber music, simplicity in a complex context, improvisation coexisting with exact notation, music combined with film or projections, seriousness in counterpoint with humor. Raw melodic schemes may come from Purcell, the infill from the detritus of electronic distortion or street noise. Categories are split open or blurred, habits unbent. To quote Iggy Pop: "The neon forest is my home."

Torvund himself puts it like this:

"My chief concern is keeping an open approach as to what may function as the constitutive parts of a work of music, and trying to combine several kinds and levels of elements. ... Contrasts, juxtapositions and completely opposite perspectives interest me because I believe that there is a lot happening around and beneath the ordinary musical framework, and a lot of unconscious forces to be explored."

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