

SURVIVAL MUSIC

8 PM THURSDAY 19 MAY 2011
LOTTE LEHMANN CONCERT HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA BARBARA



Sonic Landscape I, graphic score by David Gordon

The Center for Research in Electronic Art Technology (JoAnn Kuchera-Morin, Director, Curtis Roads, Associate Director, Matthew Wright, Research Director) presents compositions projected on the Creatophone, a pluriphonic sound projection system developed at CREATE.

All works in tonight's program are Santa Barbara premieres.

0. *Balance of Power* (2011) CREATE Ensemble
12 minutes

Balance of Power seeks to deal with the chaotic power dynamics of a diverse group of musicians playing amorphous sounds from their laptops. There are three levels of musical prominence represented in this piece by three different colored squares in the visual score: foreground/leader (black), middleground/mid-level support (gray), background/low-level support (white). Charlie Roberts created a visualization of this score so that the audience and performers can see in real time where we are in the piece. Each performer has the power to change the group dynamic at any time with the push of a button, but does not have a say in what the new group dynamic will be. The constant shifting of hierarchy leads to a kind of certainty in the irregularity where no one actor has absolute power but remains an integral linchpin in the development of the piece.

CREATE Ensemble is Joann Cho, Charlie Roberts, Luke Taylor, Matthew Wright, Karl Yerkes

1. *Escape* {*A Sonic SnowScape through Granular Fields*} (2011) Myles Sciotto
5 minutes

eScape is a sonic journey through field recordings taken during a snowshoeing adventure in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Granular synthesis was used and accompanied by additional sound generation (frequency modulation) via MaxMSP. eScape was composed, mixed and mastered in Ableton Live.

Of particular interest is the subtle sonic spectrum of cold and quiet. The dense forest of tall pines limits the reverb and absorbs nearly all the resonant environment. Recordings of the punctuated sounds contain an immense array of sonic timbers produced by the high frequencies of the falling and cracking ice pitted against the lower frequencies of crushing and compressing snow. The collocated sound sources explore an eerily ambiguous sonic landscape.

F.Myles Sciotto is an architect interested in empirical space, or the ways in which structure imposes Affect and the dialogue between the visceral and theoretical experience. F.Myles explores "Alternity", an experiential translation of the mind/body and how the subconscious is able to inform its surroundings. The goal is to develop

intelligent architectures created from bio-data and pattern processing, synthesized within new spatial interfaces.

2. *Sonic Landscape I* (2011) David Gordon
6 minutes

Composers often begin a work by creating a sketch, which may take the form of a diagram such as ABA', a verbal description, or simply a drawing on paper. Whereas the composer's sketch has traditionally been viewed as largely a means to an end, worthwhile more for its intellectual or historical content than artistic value, in visual art, the sketch has long received a particular veneration, even at times being considered greater than the final painting, since it shows the artist's immediate response to the act of viewing. In my recent work, I have explored the technique of graphic synthesis, in large part because it eliminates this distinction between the sketch and the final work, treating an image as sonic material, from which the computer composes the resulting audio. This process allows the finished work to retain much of the immediacy of the composer's initial gestures.

I composed *Sonic Landscape I* using the program High C, an OSX implementation of Xenakis' pioneering UPIC console, which allows the composer to create a graphic score by mapping sound frequencies against time using individual lines, which each represent a single oscillator with a particular waveform and envelope. The score for the piece was created entirely from two initial gestures: layered glissandi and pointillistic clouds. These "motives" are subsequently replicated, transformed, given different waveforms and envelopes, scaled both in time and pitch, and layered with each other, in order to add variety and contrast to the underlying material. To preserve the immediacy of the initial sketch, I composed the entire piece visually, without listening to the result until the score was finished.

David Gordon is a PhD student in the Music Composition program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he currently studies with Clarence Barlow, Curtis Roads and Joel Feigin. Following his longtime, dual interests in music and visual art, David's work spans a broad range of media, including instrumental works, electronic music, painting, photography, digital art, video and interdisciplinary projects. He began his formal music education at Pomona College, while earning a B.A. in Studio Art. After graduating in 2004, David continued composition studies with Bruce Reich in Los Angeles. From 2007-2010, he earned a M.M. in Composition at California State University, Northridge, where his primary teachers were Liviu Marinescu and Dan Hosken. David's music has been performed at the Brand Library in Glendale, UCLA Schoenberg Hall, and other venues in Southern California. His compositional interests include graphic synthesis, sound spatialization, and intersections between music and visual art.

3. *Epicurus* (2010) Curtis Roads
3 min

Epicurus, dedicated to the Greek sage (341-270 BCE), is the fruit of a long journey, beginning with experiments in Paris with pulse synthesis in February 1995. Three months later, I processed these recordings by means of analog tape-loop-echo-feedback and digital granulation. These operations resulted in a large database of sound material—hundreds of disparate fragments, hours of sound. Assembling *Epicurus* was like solving a complicated puzzle, and the result is a form with a fast section, a slow section, and a grand ending, all concentrated in three minutes and six seconds.

Curtis Roads is Professor of Media Arts and Technology with a joint appointment in Music at UCSB.

4. *Arctic Winds* (2010) Maggi Payne
10 min

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 playful piece.

5. *Liquid Amber* (2010) Maggi Payne
12 min

Liquid Amber's images and sounds are about texture—images that compel me to physically reach out and touch them in real life and on-screen, just as I am drawn to reach up to try to touch a star in the desert's black velvet night sky. The sounds are physical, tactile, visceral as well, produced by my touching various objects (skin, fabric, wood, metal, water, etc.). There are only a few exceptions, as when I used synchronized sound in the fast water sequences. When I shot those scenes the spray of the water on my face and tumultuous sound were so very physical that the images still conjure those sensations for me.

There is not an attempt to add sound effects to the visuals although certainly many sounds relate directly to the image. But the perspective is intentionally skewed as these images have great depth with layers that change in texture, so certain sounds detail the surfaces, others reflect the image's deep interior. The images are of nature or illustrate nature's effects on man-made objects such as a sheet of copper and an old ship. The title derives

from the Liquid Amber tree that provided the ending for this work.

6. *Glassy Metals* (2010) Maggi Payne
10 min

A continuation of my fascination with the sounds of metal objects, *Glassy Metals* explores the sounds of tungsten filaments in burned out incandescent light bulbs, magnetic (iron oxide) tape rushing across a head stack, small ball bearings, ball chains of various sizes, sheet metal, tiny gear motors, bikes, BART (which permeates the sonic landscape of the San Francisco Bay Area), freight trains, and other metal objects. Some sounds are used in their raw state; others, such as the BART train, which now sounds like the wind, are transformed beyond recognition. Selecting only small portions of the spectrums of several sources and layering them results in new constructs with constantly fluctuating details. The ending exaggerates these perturbations, as sources emerge from the texture and fold back in as if they are fluttering insects hovering close by briefly, then flitting away, only to return later. Although several sources are cyclic, none are precisely so, nor are they synchronous with other sources combined in the layers, so apparent synchronous relationships occur only briefly, then drift apart. *Glassy Metals* takes its title from non-crystalline (amorphous) metallic materials.

Maggi Payne's electroacoustic works often incorporate visuals, including dancers outfitted with electroluminescent wire and videos she creates using images ranging from nature to the abstract. She composes music for dance and video, and is a photographer, recording engineer, flutist, and Co-Director of the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College in the San Francisco Bay Area. She creates immersive environments, inviting listeners/participants to enter the sound and be carried with it, experiencing it from the inside out in intimate detail. The sounds are almost tactile, visible, tangible. The music is based on location recordings, with each sound carefully selected for its potential—its slow unfolding revealing delicate intricacies—and its inherent spatialization architecting and sculpting the aural space where multiple perspectives and trajectories coexist. Her works have been presented in the Americas, Europe, Japan, and Australasia. She received Composer's Grants and an Interdisciplinary Arts Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts; video grants from the Mellon Foundation and the Western States Regional Media Arts Fellowships Program; and honorary mentions from Concours International de Musique et d'Art Sonore Electroacoustiques de Bourges and Prix Ars Electronica. Her works appear on Innova, Lovely Music, Starkland, Asphodel, New World (CRI), Centaur, Ubuibi, MMC, Digital Narcis, Music and Arts, Frog Peak, and/OAR, Capstone, and Mills College labels. www.maggipayne.com