

San Francisco Tape Music Festival
Program Notes for Friday, January 26, 2007

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

Matt Ingalls :: *Fingerlingette* :: [2:28]

Fingerlingette is part of a series of short works that focus on rhythm. In these works, I have tried to use fast "jump-cuts" to reproduce the syncopated energy often found in my improvised music activities. The material used in these collage works is often recycled from older pieces and recordings, even including some tapes my mother made of my early childhood.

Matt Ingalls (b. 1970) is a composer, clarinetist, and computer musician from Oakland. He is the founder and co-director of the San Francisco Tape Music Collective and its parent organization, sfSound. Before focusing on making music instead of entering competitions, Matt received the Deuxième Prix (Catégorie Humour - Puy) in the 1994 Concours International de Musique Electroacoustique de Bourges and was the first recipient of the ASCAP/SEAMUS Commission and Recording Prize. Matt is also well known for his computer music software. He created the Soundflower audio routing tool for cycling74 and his Csound version for Macintosh, MacCsound won an Electronic Musician Magazine "Editor's Choice Award" in 2004. Matt currently works as the lead programmer for GVOX and teaches digital audio synthesis at the University of San Francisco.

Jen Boyd :: *Rain Blossom* :: [5:50]

This is a recording of a Cherry Blossom tree made on a rainy day in the hills behind my old house in Castaic, CA. I wanted to capture the many timbres of sound as the rain fell onto the branches. This recording was made with a pair of stereo contact microphones and a flash recorder.

Jen Boyd spends her free time collecting microscopic recordings of trees, plants, and other audible organic matter; and creating layered compositions in real-time with the use of a portable mixer. She captures natural sounds as they unfold. Working with contact microphones and a flash recorder, Boyd constructs stereo soundscapes to give depth to the delicate sounds of trees and plants alike.

She has a BFA in music technology from CalArts and is currently working on her masters in electronic music at Mills College. While at Mills Boyd plans to explore the depths of natural sound and their presentation as art in the form of live performance and sound installations. Boyd is currently exploring various means of releasing her recorded works of natural sounds and plans to continue to build an archive of Phonographies and contact recordings.

Suk-Jun Kim :: *Kotmun* :: [8:52]

The title *Kotmun* is a Korean word, meaning 'a gate of flowers'. In Korea, ornamenting on doors with the drawings or wood-sculpting of flowers was not just an act of decoration; it was one of the common practices to bring good spirits to houses and to people who would live there. Many pass or peek through these doors – an act of desire to get to another space. At some times, however, one just gazes at the doors, and their beautiful flowers and colors. One forgets why she or he was looking at them in the first place or what they wanted to seek beyond them. They are on the border in-between, enchanted by their exquisite beauty.

With *Kotmun*, the composer hoped to *auralize* this moment of awareness. With the help of poetic

elements of recorded sounds and thematic structures of the composition, the composer aimed at creating the uneasiness and yet, spell-binding experience of this border. *Kotmun* was commissioned by IMEB (Institut de Musique Electroacoustique de Bourges), Bourges, France, and received a Mention at the 6th MUSICA VIVA International Electroacoustic Music Competition in 2005, Lisbon, Portugal, and a finalist both in the 2006 International Competition of Electroacoustic Music and Sonic in Bourges, France, and in the 2006 Métamorphoses, Ohain, Belgium.

Suk-Jun Kim studied theology at Yonsei university, South Korea and Recording Engineering at OIART (Ontario Institute of Audio and Recording Technology). He earned a master's degree in Music Technology at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL and a diploma at CCMIX, Paris. Now a doctoral fellow at the University of Florida, Kim has received prizes and mentions in Métamorphoses (The Biennial Acousmatic Composition Competition, Belgium), the ASCAP/SEAMUS Student Commission Competition, the International Competition of Electroacoustic Music and Sonic in Bourges, France, and MUSICA VIVA, Lisbon, Portugal, and MUSICA NOVA, Prague, Czech. His recent commissions include an electroacoustic music for the 2006 World Cup, SpACE-Net First Commission, and two Bourges commissions. Kim's music has been performed worldwide and can be heard on ICMC, IMEB, and SEAMUS, M&R labels.

Thom Blum :: *Nomen Plaid* :: [8:03]

nomen, v.t. To take, to steal, to filch, to pilfer;

n. Name.

An artistically licensed (loose knit) plaid, woven from disparate sonic threads, broadly grouped by bandwidth and density -- from pure sine tones to white noise, from continuous to particulate. Many switchbacks occur and the threads doubleback on themselves as the fabric materializes. But the end reveals the pattern's loop point, and the plaid is complete. This piece is dedicated to Debra.

Thom Blum (b. 1954, Columbus, Ohio USA) has been composing electroacoustic and computer music since 1972. His works have been presented in concerts, festivals and radio broadcasts internationally. He studied composition at California Institute of the Arts (1972-74), where his teachers included James Tenney, Ingram Marshall, and Curtis Roads. He established a curriculum in computer applications to music at The Ohio State University, under the mentorship of Thomas Whitney, Charles Csuri, and Thomas Wells (B.S., 1977). He is a Co-founder of the International Computer Music Association (1977), and served as Associate Editor for M.I.T. Press Journals Computer Music Journal (1987-1996). Residing in San Francisco since 1978, he has worked as an audio software engineer for LucasFilm/DroidWorks, a researcher and software architect for Yamaha Music Technologies, and is a Co-founder of Muscle Fish, a sound analysis and processing software company. In 2001, he joined the five person collective known as the New San Francisco Tape Music Center (2001), which also includes composers Matt Ingalls, Joseph Anderson, Cliff Caruthers, and Kent Jolly. In 2002-2003, he was named Artist for Lake Technology, Inc. (Australia) and was awarded a Huron sound spatialization system for his personal use in composing.

Jason Rabb :: *Hum Vamp (for Snap)* :: [3:39]

Hum Vamp (for Snap) is an intimate piece using a single recorded voice and vibraphone. *Hum Vamp (for Snap)* makes use of contrast and likeness of timbre, forming a relationship of opposition and imitation between the two instruments.

Jason Rabb holds a Master's Degree in Music Composition from the University of Utah where he studied with Chilean-American composer Miguel Chuaqui. He studied with Patrick Williams at the University of Montana in Missoula where he received his B.M. in Composition and Music

Technology. He has also studied percussion performance and guitar, traveling throughout the United States and Europe as a performer. Jason Rabb's works include music composed for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, electro-acoustic music, and electro-acoustic with live instruments.

James Tenney :: *For Ann (rising)* :: [11:47]

For Ann (rising) is a piece of electronic music created by James Tenney in 1969. To many people, it is THE Tenney signature piece, and a kind of essential symbol of his aesthetic. It consists only of 15 constantly rising sine waves, all spaced a minor sixth apart. While the original experiments were intended to illustrate a property of human perception, Tenney's piece problematizes it: One simultaneously perceives the lines as forming one continuously rising line, yet one is constantly aware of SHIFTS in perception from line to line or lines -- a kind of "gestalt counterpoint", if you will.

A new version has been realized for this performance based on Tom Erbe's Csound score used for *Artifact* CD1007. We have moved each sinewave to its own channel and position in the performance space, boosted the sampling rate to 48k, and fixed some coding flaws with interpolation and enveloping.

James Tenney's music deals simply and artfully with perception, just intonation, stochastic elements, information theory, and with what he calls 'swell' (arch) form. His pieces are most often tributes and subtitled as such. He was a pioneer in the field of electronic and computer music, working with Max Mathews and others at the Bell Telephone Laboratories in the early 1960s to develop programs for computer sound-generation and composition. He has written works for a variety of media, both instrumental and electronic, many of them using alternative tuning systems.

Tenney was the author of articles on musical acoustics, computer music, and musical form and perception, as well as two books: *META + HODOS: A Phenomenology of 20th-Century Musical Materials and an Approach to the Study of Form* (1961; Frog Peak, 1988) (one of, if not the, earliest applications of gestalt theory and cognitive science to music) and *A History of 'Consonance' and 'Dissonance'* (Excelsior, 1988).

A performer as well as a composer and theorist, James Tenney was co-founder and conductor of the Tone Roads Chamber Ensemble in New York City (1963-70). He performed with John Cage, as well as with the ensembles of Harry Partch, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass.

James Tenney was born in 1934 in Silver City, N.M., and grew up in Arizona and Colorado, where he received his early training as a pianist and composer. His teachers and mentors have included Eduard Steuermann, Chou Wen-Chung, Lionel Nowak, Carl Ruggles, Lejaren Hiller, Kenneth Gaburo, Edgard Varèse, Harry Partch and John Cage. Tenney taught composition at CalArts, the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, the University of California at Santa Cruz and York University in Toronto. He died on 24 August 2006 of lung cancer.

Moe! Staiano :: *Tape Piece No.1: Collapse of Travel and Time* :: [13:46]

Tape Piece No.1: Collapse of Travel and Time (2006), collected from personal various field recordings from Oakland, New York, etc. by Moe! Staiano.

Moe! Staiano is a percussionist who often uses found objects on his trap set (i.e. prepared percussion). Throughout the years, Moe! (yes, he includes the exclamation mark in his name) has performed on various pipes, food pans, pressure caps, sheet metals, nicknacks & other stuff that

has been found, given or stolen (mainly from Pizza Hut when he worked there including a nifty Spatula that he bows). His third solo CD, *The Absolute Tradition of No Traditions*, will be release on Psychform Records next year.

Moe! was a member of two important bay-area-based band: Vacuum Tree Head and Sleepytime Gorilla Museum. Moe! composes text/graphic scores for his collective ensemble, Moe!kestra!, which has employed at least 15-45 players, destroying a piano, u-bolts, wine glasses, sirens, and sex toys. The debut disc of Moe!kestra! was released in 2003. A second volume of conducted improvisations will be released early next year.

George Cremaschi :: *Our Blood Was Boiling* :: [4:48]

This piece began crouching down behind a newly built (rebuilt?) mosque in a small village not far from Mostar in southern Bosnia. It was finished hunched over knobs and faders in a large city not far from the Hayward Fault in northern California.

George Cremaschi has composed for many settings including chamber groups, small ensembles, solo contrabass, electronics, film, spoken word, dance and theater, as well as performing and collaborating in as many contexts. His work appears on over 25 recordings on the Apestaartje, Beak Doctor, Black Saint, Evolving Ear, Limited Sedition, Music & Arts, Rastaskan and 482 Music labels. Since 1999 he has divided his time between Oakland and the Czech Republic, where he works as an administrator at CESTA, an arts residency center.

Györgi Ligeti ::

***Pièce Électronique no.3* :: [2:06] :: *Glissandi* :: [7:34] :: *Artikulation* :: [3:45]**

Shortly after Ligeti left Hungary after the crushing of the 1956 uprising he came to Cologne and lived as a guest of Karlheinz Stockhausen. By Ligeti's own account, he was first introduced to the techniques of electronic music by Gottfried Michael Koenig in early 1957, who engaged him to work in the Studio for Electronic Music of the West German Radio Network. The first result was *Glissandi* (1957), a dense configuration of complex or pure sounds in continuous movements. This early piece already suggests the path Ligeti would chose later in his orchestra compositions *Apparitions* and, above all, *Atmosphères*.

The second electronic piece, *Artikulation* (1958), is entirely based on "aleatoric" principles. Different types of material were put on tape and the cut-off pieces were put in several boxes. The selections of the different sound-patterns was left to chance operations. Their placement within the composition followed a rigid serial plan. He remained at the studio until 1959 and *Artikulation* was one of two pieces composed during these years (the other, *Pièce Électronique no.3*, was not realized into sound until some 40 years later), having its premiere in Cologne on 25 March 1958. The performance medium of *Artikulation* is a four-track tape and it explores the linguistic similarities of different kinds of sounds. The piece combines a multitude of electronic sounds in a highly disjunct style, which layered into a multi-level polyphony, become a synthetic conversation. The disassembled beginning uses a variety of inflections including high and low voices and some agitated interjections, their interactions creating the dialogue. The quiet gurgling heard in the opening of the piece can be traced throughout the entire work, at times being answered by rare, deep, and distant replies. The brief snippets of melody are provided by this same gurgling sound and, although fleeting, add yet another level of discourse. As the piece progresses, the phrase lengths shorten until mere fragments are all that remain along with more intense juxtapositions of the recurring material. The counterpoint that was discernible earlier in the piece dissolves as the conversation-like interactions alternate faster and faster. Subsequently, the use of musical space

becomes more obvious and more effective. The acceleration of the musical line aids in what is actually the dying out of the imaginary conversation. Whereas some later works by Ligeti tend to be more static and calm, *Artikulation* is restless and animated. The “voices” never cease to communicate and the consistent overlapping textures create a “kaleidoscopic polyphony.”

Pièce Électronique no.3 (1957) has had a long period of incubation: nearly 40 years. Ligeti composed the score in 1957 (originally called *Atmosphères*), but the technology at the time was too primitive to synchronize the very dense and precise sine wave clusters. In 1996, Kees Tazelaar, John Berg, and John van Kreijl at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague realized a 4-channel version of the work in Csound. When Ligeti finally heard the realization, he decided on the spot to dedicate the work to Gottfried Michael Koenig.

György Ligeti was an adventurer in form and expression and a great visionary of contemporary music. His richly varied output takes a special position in its musical quality and uncompromising individuality. Ligeti moved far away from aesthetic trends and methods all his life. He was characterized by fresh and unorthodox ideas, any form of dogmatism was foreign to his nature, his entire oeuvre is marked by radical turning points. Admired and hugely influential in the profession, the sensual accessibility of his music has won the hearts of audiences everywhere.

Born in Dicsöszentmárton, Transylvania, on 28 May 1923, the son of Hungarian-Jewish parents, he studied at the Klausenburg conservatory with Ferenc Farkas from 1941 to 1943, later (1945–49) at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest with Ferenc Farkas, Sándor Veress, Pál Járdányi and Lajos Bárdos. Very soon he developed the micropolyphony which became one of the most significant features of his music. In his early pieces, such as the a-cappella choral work *Éjszaka Reggel* and his first successful work in the West, *Apparitions*, this style is already extremely distinctive. In December 1956, after the Hungarian Revolution, he fled to the west, for artistic and political reasons. Working as a free-lancer at the West German Radio electronic studios in Cologne (1957–58) he made an intensive study of the music of Karlheinz Stockhausen, Mauricio Kagel and Pierre Boulez, which found its musical expression in *Artikulation* (1958). This work, with *Atmosphères*, the orchestral work he created in 1961, brought Ligeti instant fame. In this piece, he worked almost completely without traditional melodic, harmonic and rhythmic parameters and concentrated on sounds with constantly changing textures. “Micropolyphony”, he once described, “means such a dense tissue that the individual parts become inaudible and only the resulting intermingling harmonies are effective as a form.”

After his intensive work in Cologne in the 1950s and the development of micropolyphony in the 1960s, Ligeti’s personal style became simpler and more transparent in the 1970s. And as if wanting to withdraw from the predominating musical tendencies, he began to use tonal sounds again. He said: “I no longer listen to rules on what is to be regarded as modern and what as old-fashioned.” His only full-length stage work *Le Grand Macabre* was inspired by the theatre of the absurd and is teeming with operetta-like wit and black humor. The composer wanted to communicate more directly with audiences: “Stage action and music should be dangerous and bizarre, absolutely exaggerated, absolutely crazy.”

In the 1980s and 1990s, Ligeti expanded his musical horizons again, incorporating structural principles of African drumming music into his works: the fanatic of the intricate developed new complex polyrhythmic techniques. They form the basis of the three collections of his *Études pour piano* which are considered to be the most important piano music of the late 20th century. György Ligeti travelled a long road: from Romanian folk music and the tonal language of his fellow countryman Béla Bartók to his own cosmos of sounds. The mentor of a whole generation of composers, he wanted to “fuse the fear of death with laughter”. Ligeti was honoured with all the world’s major musical awards, including the Grawemeyer Award, the Praemium Imperiale, the Ernst-von-Siemens Music Award, the Sibelius Prize, and the Kyoto-Prize. He died on 12 June 2006 in Vienna.

Jonty Harrison :: *Unsound Objects* :: [13:09]

One of the main criteria in Pierre Schaeffer's definition of the "sound object" was that, through the process of "reduced listening", one should hear sound material purely as sound, divorced from any associations with its physical origins - in other words, what is significant about a recorded violin sound (for example) is that particular sound, its unique identity, and not its "violin-ness". Despite this ideal, a rich repertoire of music has been created since the 1950s which plays precisely on the ambiguities evoked when recognition and contextualization of sound material rub shoulders with more abstracted (and abstract) musical structures. But as these structures should themselves be organically related to the peculiarities of individual sound objects within them, the ambiguity is compounded: interconnections and multiple levels of meaning proliferate. The known becomes strange and the unknown familiar in a continuum of reality, unreality and surreality, where boundaries shift and continually renewed definitions are the only constant...

Unsound Objects was commissioned by the International Computer Music Association and first performed at the 1995 International Computer Music Conference in Banff, Alberta, Canada. Along with four other tape works, it is available on *Articles indéfinis*, a Jonty Harrison "solo" CD on the empreintes DIGITALes label (Montreal).

Jonty Harrison (born 1952) studied with Bernard Rands at the University of York, graduating with a DPhil in Composition in 1980. Between 1976 and 1980 he lived in London, working at the National Theatre (where he produced the tape components for many productions, including *Tamburlaine the Great*, *Julius Caesar*, *Brand* and *Amadeus*) and City University. In 1980 he joined the Music Department of The University of Birmingham, where he is now Senior Lecturer, as well as Director of BEAST (Birmingham ElectroAcoustic Sound Theatre) and the Electroacoustic Music Studios. He plays an active role in the musical life of Britain, serving on a number of committees, as well as making conducting appearances with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (most notably conducting Stockhausen's *Momente* in Birmingham, Huddersfield and London) and the Birmingham University New Music Ensemble.