



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas
College of Music

Ensemble Recital | Tuesday, April 9, 2024 | 8:00 pm | Voertman Hall

NOVA

Directed by Anne Maker

from *songbirdsongs* (1980) John Luther Adams (b. 1953)

1. Woodthrush
2. Evensong

Cameron Bilek and Alison Parker, piccolo
Patrick Overturf and Luke Gibson, percussion
Nicole Ying, celesta

Esprit rude/Esprit doux II (1994) Elliott Carter (1908–2012)

Alison Parker, flute • Kean Xiong, clarinet
Patrick Overturf, marimba

Exercise 39 (2020) Christian Wolff (b. 1934)

Heather Pryse, flute • Zoe Harris, double bass
Joshua "JD" Fuller, lap steel

Only the Words Themselves Mean

What They Say (2011) Kate Soper (b. 1981)

1. Go Away
2. Head, Heart
3. Getting to Know Your Body

Jessica Ferring Glenn, soprano • Cameron Bilek, flutes

Music for 1, 2, or 3 People (1964) Christian Wolff (b. 1934)

Jacob Mast, tuba • Luke Gibson, percussion

Into the Blue (1996) Rebecca Saunders (b. 1967)

Charlotte MacDonald, clarinet • Victoria Donaldson, bassoon
Xiyang Liu, cello • Zoe Harris, double bass
Teng Cao, piano • Benjamin Damann, percussion
Chelsea Lu, conductor

songbirdsongs—"These small songs are echoes of rare moments and places where the voices of birds have been clear and I have been quiet enough to hear. Now and then this magic finds me wandering (like one of Harry Partch's Lost Musicians) in search of my own voice. If I have abdicated the position of Composer (with a capital "C") it is because, like e.e. cummings: "I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing than teach ten-thousand stars how not to dance." After all, what do we really create but answers to Creation? This music is not a literal transcription. It is a translation. Not imitation, but evocation. My concern is not with precise details of pitch and meter, for too much precision can deafen us to such things as birds and music. I listen for other, less tangible nuances. These melodies and rhythms, then, are not so much constructed artifacts as they are spontaneous affirmations. No one has yet explained why the free songs of birds are so simply beautiful. And what do they say? What are their meanings? We may never know. But beyond the realm of ideas and emotions, language and sense, we just may hear something of their essence. From there, as Annie Dillard suggests, we can begin 'learning the strange syllables, one by one.'" – John Luther Adams

Esprit rude/Esprit doux II—"Esprit rude/Esprit doux was composed for the celebration of Pierre Boulez's 60th birthday on March 31, 1985, commissioned by the Southwest German Radio. The title, translated as "rough breathing/smooth breathing," refers to the pronunciation of classical Greek words beginning with a vowel. With esprit rude (rough breathing) the initial vowel is to be preceded by a sounded H, and is indicated by a reverse comma above the letter. With esprit doux (smooth breathing) the initial vowel is not to be preceded by H and is indicated by a comma above the vowel. In the Greek for "sixtieth year" (transliterated as hexèkoston etos) the initial epsilon of the first word has a rough breathing sign while the epsilon of the second has a smooth one. The score begins and ends with the motto:

B-flat C A E

B (O) U(t) L(a) E (Z) using both the French and German names of the notes. Both instruments have some rough and some smooth breathing." – Elliott Carter

Exercise 39—"Consisting of five sections of musical material, each delineated with varying degrees of specificity, "Exercise 39" offers performers a canvas upon which to engage in spontaneous interaction and creative dialogue. The score includes fully notated staves of music, passages of notated rhythms alone, segments specifying only dynamics, and abstract instructions, all intended to be interpreted and realized by two or more players using any sound sources at their disposal."

Only the Words Themselves Mean What They Say—"I wrote 'Only the Words Themselves Mean What They Say' out of a determination to test my limits as a vocalist and performer and an itch to make something out of Lydia Davis' fabulously quirky, slyly profound texts. Writing as a composer/performer opens up the pre-compositional realm to lots of useful improvisatory tangents and fresh timbral discoveries, and working closely with flutist Erin Lesser led to many happy surprises that eventually made their way into the final score. Lydia Davis' words suggested an unhinged virtuosity and idiosyncratic, multi-layered musical reading that took me from screwball comedy to paired musical gymnastics: the flute becomes a kind of Iron Man suit for the voice, amplifying it to new planes of expressivity, intensity, and insanity as the two players struggle, with a single addled brain, to navigate the treacherous labyrinth of simple logic." – Kate Soper

Music for 1, 2, or 3 People—"In 'Music for 1, 2, or 3 People,' Wolff presents a framework of musical material that can be realized by one, two, or three performers, each contributing their unique voice to the collective sonic tapestry. The score provides a series of instructions, graphic notations, and textual cues, inviting performers to engage in a process of spontaneous creation and interpretation. Central to Wolff's conception of 'Music for 1, 2, or 3 People' is the idea of indeterminacy, wherein the precise realization of the musical material is left open to the discretion of the performers. This approach empowers musicians to make real-time decisions regarding elements such as pitch, rhythm, dynamics, and timbre, fostering a sense of agency and ownership over the performance."

Into the Blue—"The following quotations may serve to illuminate the 'blue' this composition moves towards:

Blue transcends the solemn geography of human limits.

The blood of sensibility is blue...

In the pandemonium of image

I present you with the universal Blue

An infinite possibility

Becoming tangible.

Blue is darkness made visible.

Time is what keeps the light from reaching us.

To be an astronaut of the void...

For Blue there are no boundaries and solutions.

The darkness comes in with the tide.

Agas and aeons quit the room

Exploding into timelessness...

Derek Jarman Chroma, Vintage, 1995" – Rebecca Saunders

*Seven hundred seventy-ninth program of the 2023–2024 season
Photography and videography are prohibited*