



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas
College of Music

Ensemble Recital | Wednesday, April 12, 2023 | 8:00 pm | Voertman Hall

NOVA

Directed by Elizabeth McNutt

Four Dialogues (1974)Samuel Adler (b. 1928)

- I. Quite slowly
- II. Fast and humorous
- III. Slowly and rather lazily
- IV. Fast with a happy spirit

Justin Weis, euphonium • Sophia Lo, marimba

Only the Words Themselves Mean

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

- I. Go Away
- II. Head, Heart
- III. Getting to Know Your Body

Jessica Schury, flute, bass flute, piccolo

Rachel Schuck, mezzo-soprano

--Intermission--

Retour (2013)José-Luis Hurtado (b. 1975)

Hyunsu Yoon, flute • Charlotte MacDonald, clarinet

Justin Weis, euphonium • Colin Stokes, cello • Kory Reeder, bass

Denton Sutherlin, percussion • Nicole Ying, piano

Form I in memoriam Edgard Varèse (1993)James Tenney (1934–2006)

Hyunsu Yoon, flute • Jessica Schury, flute

Anne Dearth Maker, bass flute • Elizabeth McNutt, alto flute

Charlotte MacDonald, clarinet • Jessica Stearns, alto saxophone

Garrison Gerard, trumpet • Justin Weis, euphonium

Grace Remmer, viola • Kourtney Newton, cello • Colin Stokes, cello

Kory Reeder, double bass • Conner Simmons, double bass

Denton Sutherlin, vibraphone • Sophia Lo, vibraphone

Nicole Ying, piano

Four Dialogues—Samuel Adler has led a long compositional career spanning almost seven decades. His work combines many distinct compositional techniques ranging from serial and aleatoric devices to diatonic passages. Written for Gordon Stout and Brian Bowman, Adler composed *Four Dialogues* as a discussion between both instruments. Each movement finds the players using a drastically different voice, ranging from the dovetailed phrases of the first movement to the apathetic laments of the third and the driving rhythmic interlocking of the final movement.

Only the Words Themselves Mean What They Say—Only the Words Themselves Mean What They Say is the second movement of *IPSA DIXIT*, a six-movement chamber music theatre work for soprano, flute, violin, and percussion that explores the intersections of music, language, and meaning. 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, multilayered 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

I. Go Away

When he says, "Go away and don't come back," you are hurt by the words even though you know he does not mean what the words say, or rather you think he probably means "Go away" because he is so angry at you he does not want you anywhere near him right now, but you are quite sure he does not want you to stay away, he must want you to come back, either soon or later, depending on how quickly he may grow less angry during the time you are away, how he may remember other less angry feelings he often has for you that may soften his anger now. But though he does mean "Go away," he does not mean it as much as he means the anger that the words have in them, as he also means the anger in the words "don't come back." He means all the anger meant by someone who says such words and means what the words say, that you should not come back, ever, or rather he means most of the anger meant by such a person, for if he meant all the anger he would also mean what the words themselves say, that you should not come back, ever. But, being angry, if he were merely to say, "I'm very angry at you," you would not be as hurt as you are, or you would not be hurt at all, even though the degree of anger, if it could be measured, might be exactly the same. Or perhaps the degree of anger could not be the same. Or perhaps it could be the same but the anger would have to be of a different kind, a kind that could be shared as a problem, whereas this kind can be told only in these words he does not mean. So it is not the anger in these words that hurts you, but the fact that he chooses to say words to you that mean you should never come back, even though he does not mean what the words say, even though only the words themselves mean what they say.

II. Head, Heart

Heart weeps.

Head tries to help heart.

Head tells heart how it is, again.

You will lose the ones you love. They will all go.

But even the earth will go, someday.

Heart feels better, then.

But the words of Head do not remain long in the ears of Heart.

Heart is so new to this.

I want them back, says Heart. Head is all Heart has.

Help, Head. Help Heart.

III. Getting to Know Your Body

If your eyeballs move, this means that you're thinking, or about to start thinking. If you don't want to be thinking at this particular moment, try to keep your eyeballs still.

Retour—A graduate of Harvard University and a student of Helmut Lachenmann and Brian Ferneyhough among others, José-Luis Hurtado's music explores the boundaries of music notation and timbre. He is also an active pianist and music advocate. This variable ensemble piece is designed to give freedom to the performers within a highly specific context. In lieu of meters, Hurtado uses proportional notation to define relationships between musical gestures of the different instruments. The movements of the piece flow into each other without a break. Interspersed throughout and concluding the piece is a *ritornello* section where the pianist improvises a solo supported by the other ensemble members. The work highlights unique timbres of the instruments and allows for the performers to collaborate and communicate with each other throughout the piece.

Form I in memoriam Edgard Varèse—James Tenney (August 10, 1934–August 24, 2006) was an American composer and theorist whose work influenced a wide range of musical movements from microtonality to plunderphonics. He studied composition with some of the most influential composers of the time including John Cage, Harry Partch, and Edgard Varèse. His theoretical work has been influential in modern composition, exploring concepts of harmonic perception and intonation that are also central in his compositions. *Form I in memoriam Edgard Varèse* is a composition that creates a framework from which performers build an evolving sound mass. The score provides sets of available pitches that evolve over time; players select from these pitches playing according to the dynamic instructions in the score. This system allows Tenney to specify the trajectory and form of the piece, while leaving the surface level details to the performers of any given realization. *Form I in memoriam Edgard Varèse* takes an arch form, beginning on the highest pitches played as loudly as possible, slowly moving to very low and quiet pitches, before returning back to the piercing sounds of the opening.--notes by Garrison Gerard

Future Event

Members of Nova will perform in the Sounds Modern free concert (in person and live stream) on April 15, 2 pm, at the Museum of Modern Art in Fort Worth.