



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas College of Music

Special Recital | Saturday, March 23, 2024 | 8:00 pm | MEIT (M1001)

SEAMUS @ 40 @ CEMI @ 60 Immersive Realities Explored

Ecospherical: Phantom Falls Charles Deluga
fixed media

Perseverance: An Artist Rendering Mikel Kuehn (b. 1967)
fixed media

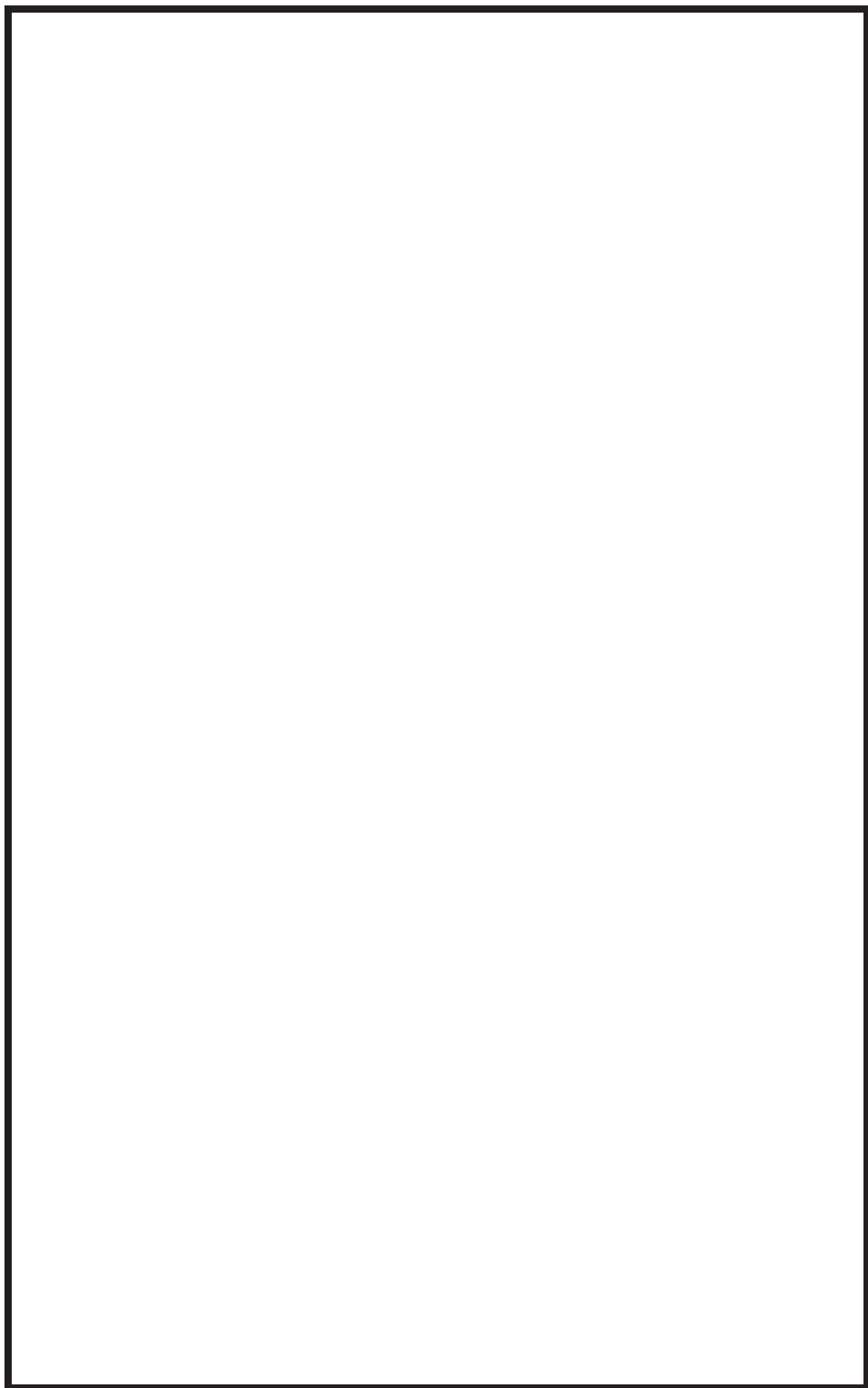
Primor D'aion Patrick Reed (b. 1991)
fixed media • Connor Mizell, video artist

Ni Nan Wei Yang (b. 1986)
fixed media

The Temptation of St. Anthony Mark Vaughn (b. 1987)
fixed media

Back to the Drawing Board Kyle Shaw
fixed media

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



Ecospherical: Phantom Falls

Charles Deluga

Program Notes: *Ecospherical* is an ambisonic work immersing listeners in natural and hybrid soundscapes of California and the Pacific Northwest. This project is based on extensive field recordings captured with a third-order ambisonic microphone array, documenting at-risk ecosystems in the face of a rapidly changing climate. Audiences are acoustically transported to these hotspots of biodiversity by decoding the spherical soundfields captured with this technology to any multichannel speaker system. Instrumental improvisations are spatialized to become integral parts of these soundscapes, communicating in the cadences of their surroundings. Using custom, multichannel convolutions, environment and performance merge to envelop listeners in surreal, textural worlds. "Phantom Falls" is an excerpt from this work, bringing together clarinet and cello (performed by Grace Talaski and Peter Ko) in a soundscape from California's North Table Mountain Ecological Reserve. Impulse responses were recorded on-location to capture the sweeping echo of the canyon at Phantom Falls, to then situate the instrumentation within it. This project functions both as an experiment in soundscape composition and an effort toward soundscape preservation, with an online archive making the raw ambisonic recordings available to environmentalists and artists. *Ecospherical* journeys through natural environments to explore the character and musicality of the ecosystems around us.

Bio: Charles Deluga is a composer/installation artist/systems designer exploring the translation of signals across sensory domains. His creative practice combines synthesis, spatial audio, ecoacoustics, and electronics to realize immersive contexts for experiencing the intersection of nature and math. Charles has designed and produced A/V systems for architectural media installations across North America, including the Statue of Liberty Museum and MoMA PS1. He is currently pursuing a PhD in computer music at UC San Diego after earning a master's in music technology from NYU. Grace Talaski, a clarinetist/composer originally from Caro, MI, specializes in twentieth and twenty-first century repertoire, especially pieces involving electronics and extended techniques. She enjoys free improvisation and creating clarinet-based sound worlds with electronics. Grace composes music for solo clarinet that focuses on exploring the vast sonic possibilities the clarinet has to offer, especially through experimentation with multiphonics. She received a bachelor of arts degree in music performance and chemistry from Albion College in Albion, MI in 2017 and a master of music in performance from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale in 2021. She is currently pursuing a D.M.A. in contemporary performance at UC San Diego. Praised as "particularly moving" (*San Diego Story*) and showing "extraordinary [musicianship]" with "unbroken focus ... fierce and committed [in performance]" (*San Diego Union Tribune*), Peter Ko is a cellist based in San Diego, CA. His training and projects have taken him across the United States, Mexico, Canada, and Europe, performing with Mark Fewer, the Dover String Quartet, Steve Schick, Aleck Karis, and Charles Curtis. He has performed at the soundSCAPE music festival in Italy with the Palimpsest ensemble, and currently serves as principal cellist for the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus.

Perseverance: An Artist Rendering

Mikel Kuehn

Program Notes: In late February of 2021, I was astonished to discover that NASA made several raw recordings of the recently landed Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover available to the public. Inspired by the first ever recorded (atmospheric) sound from another planet, I began fantasizing about what the sonic environment of Mars might be like. This piece was constructed solely from four recordings capturing the sounds of the Martian wind, the rover driving, the rover's mechanical parts (dust blower and various moving components), and the laser shots used to examine the properties of rocks. One additional recording was used: the inflight noise of the heat rejection fluid pump (recorded through the mechanical parts since there is no actual sound that propagates through the vacuum of space). These minimal source sounds were then processed, spatialized, and combined/expanded into various suggestive textures. The result is my "artist rendering" of a fantastical narrative of the Rover's journey through the sonic landscape of Mars. *Perseverance: An Artist Rendering* opens with an imaginary camera zooming from deep space onto the lonely flight of the spacecraft as it sets up for entry into the Martian atmosphere, then lands. In the short sequence immediately following, most of the source sounds that are used to build the piece are exposed in context with the work's formal narrative. From this moment on, the journey moves from fairly literal to fictional, even absurd, as the rover drives through multiple sonic terrains such as a "machine" sequence, a "thunderstorm," then encounters various "creatures" as it continues on its strange journey and eventual death.

Bio: The music of American composer Mikel Kuehn has been described as having "sensuous phrases... producing an effect of high abstraction turning into decadence," by *New York Times* critic Paul Griffiths. A 2014 Guggenheim Fellow, he has received awards, grants, and residencies from ASCAP and BMI, the Banff Centre, the Barlow Endowment, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Composers, Inc., the Copland House, the International Destellos Competition on Electroacoustic Music, the Alice M. Ditson Fund at Columbia University, the Flute New Music Consortium, the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard, the League of Composers/ISCM, the MacDowell Colony, the Ohio Arts Council, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and Yaddo. His works have been commissioned by the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Ensemble 21, Ensemble Dal Niente, Flexible Music, International Contemporary Ensemble, violist John Graham, clarinetist Marianne Gythfeldt, cellist Craig Hultgren, guitarist Dan Lippel, Perspectives of New Music, pianist Marilyn Nonken, Selmer Paris, and the Spektral Quartet, among others. Kuehn received degrees from the Eastman School of Music and the University of North Texas. His music can be heard on two New Focus Recordings portrait albums, *Object/Shadow* (2016) and *Entanglements* (2022). A member of the Eastman School of Music composition faculty, he directs the Electroacoustic Music Studios @ Eastman (EMuSE) and is the author of the computer music application *nGen*. www.mikelkuehn.com

Primor D'aion
Patrick Reed

Program Notes: *Primor D'aion* explores the idea of the creation and development of a human life cycle and the idea of cyclical incarnation. *Primor D'aion* is a snapshot of one instance of that cycle from birth to death. Various sound sources go through constant transformation as it moves through the various stages of life, until its death. After death, there is a hint of rebirth with the reintroduction of the beginning material, starting the cycle over again. The video uses a combination of generating video in AI using prompts with descriptions of the sound sources and narrative prompts based on a human transformation.

Bio: Patrick Reed is a native of Dallas, Texas. As a composer and educator, he hopes to foster and teach an interest and love for contemporary music to people of all ages. His music style ranges from solo to large ensemble compositions to works written for beginners and young band ensembles. His works have recently been performed at the International Computer Music Conference (ICMC), Electronic Music Midwest, New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, SEAMUS, NSEME, and Society of Composers national and regional conferences. Reed is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in music composition at the University of North Texas. Reed earned his master in music in composition at Bowling Green State University, where he studied with Elainie Lillios, Christopher Dietz, and Mikel Kuehn. He holds a bachelor of music in composition and music education from Texas Tech University, where he studied composition with Peter Fischer and Mei-Fang Lin.

Ni Nan
Wei Yang

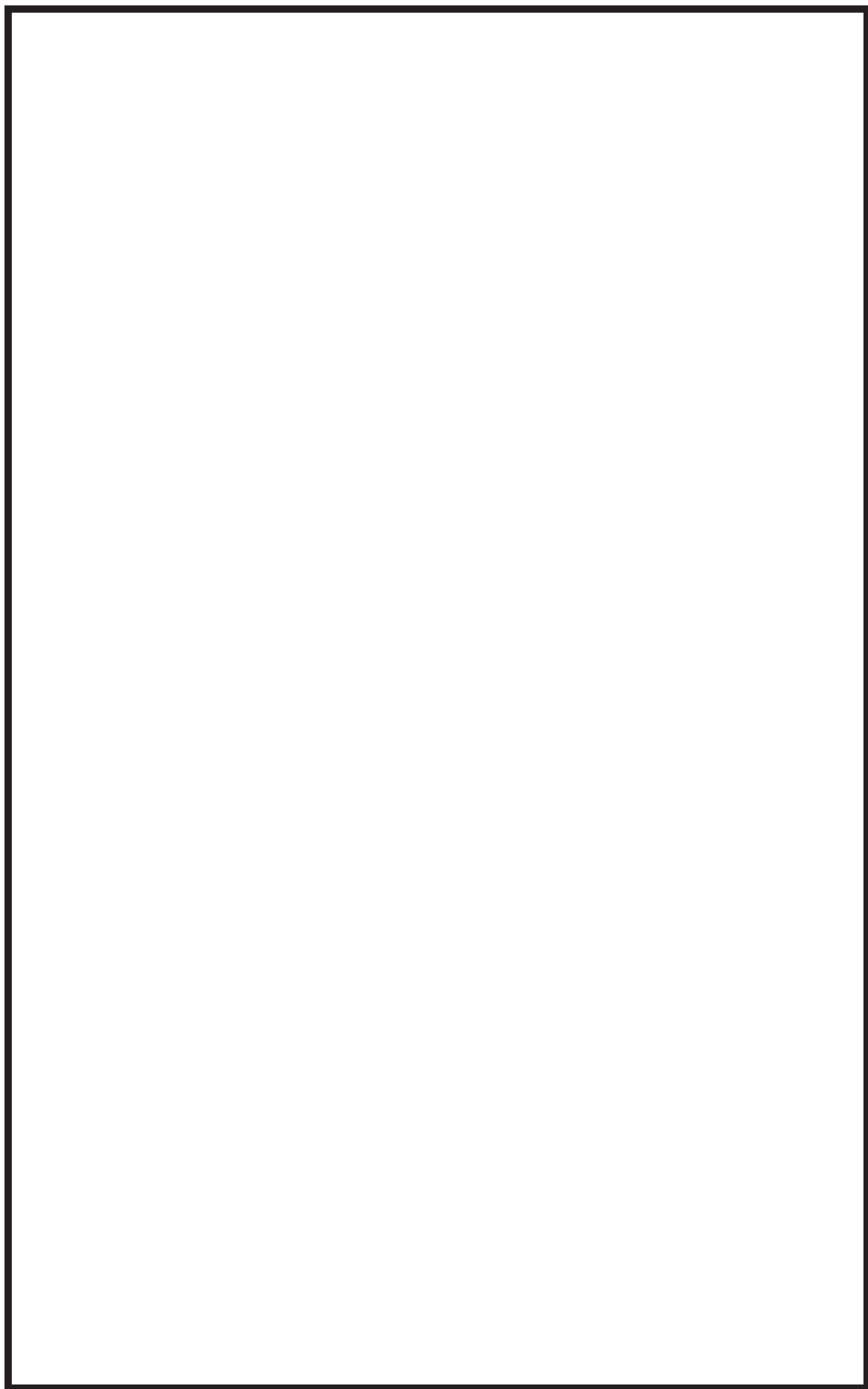
Program Notes: The Chinese title means speaking in a low voice, and can be roughly translated to murmur, whisper, mutter. Hidden behind the simple description of the sonic property, the word itself is often associated with a constellation of sentiments - nostalgia, intimacy, tenderness, to name a few. The piece itself is based on a studio recording of bowing a viola near the bridge with the strings damped. The composition draws from its rich expression, resulting from the physical effort implied in producing the sound, as well as the sonic oscillation between noise, tone, and silence, which in the piece are sometimes kept distinct, but other times transform from one to another, generating ambiguity echoing the title.

Bio: Wei Yang is a composer/sound artist from China. He works with different mediums, through which he often contemplates the body's role in sound production, sound in space, as well as the integration of various data from the performance environment (reverberation, light, etc.). Wei composes both instrumental and electronic music, and often uses various sensors/physical computing to build performative systems that allow dynamic interaction among different components. His works have been presented in China, the United States, Poland, Japan, Finland, Canada, Austria, Germany, France, Mexico, Brazil, and Switzerland. Wei received his doctor of musical arts from University of Washington under the supervision of Joël François-Durand. He is currently a Ph.D. student at the university's Center for Digital Arts and Experimental Media, working closely with Richard Karpen and Joseph Anderson.

The Temptation of St. Anthony **Mark Vaughn**

Program Notes: This piece was inspired by the artistic theme of The Temptation of St. Anthony of which there are innumerable versions by different artists throughout history. In particular, I was inspired by the Hieronymous Bosch triptych, the painting by Joos van Craesbeeck, Gustave Flaubert's novel of the same name, and Michel Foucault's discussion of this theme in his book, *Madness and Civilization*. In his book, Foucault discusses the central panel of Bosch's work where St. Anthony is transfixed by a smiling head with legs, saying that "both are prisoners of a kind of mirror interrogation, which remains unanswered in a silence inhabited only by the monstrous swarm that surrounds them...it is madness become temptation." To me this describes a profound psychological state that, at least partially, explains why so many artists have chosen to depict this theme.

Bio: Mark Vaughn is a composer working primarily in electronic music and intermedia environments. Artistically, he is interested in the creation of music and art that acknowledges the multiple layers of signification and mediation present in aesthetic perception, layers such as aesthetic and institutional conventions, the presumed knowledge of the listener, and the attribute of viscosity in musical perception. With this in mind, he frequently incorporates media of many types in his work. Vaughn received his Ph.D. and M.A. in music composition from the University of North Texas and his bachelor's degree in music technology from Montana State University. He currently works as a full-time professor of music and audio engineering at Grayson College in Denison, TX. Additionally, he is active as a composer around the world, having had work featured at ICMC, SEAMUS, Sonic Matter, NYCEMF, and other festivals.



Back to the Drawing Board

Kyle Shaw

Program Notes: The impetus behind this work was my memory of innocently exploring the visual arts while growing up. After some time, I learned that the blank canvas can be exciting--a symbol of endless possibility—but it can also be unnervingly formidable—begging to not only be filled with expression, but with meaning and significance. In the present work, the canvas is time and the aural space created by the speakers. Throughout, the artist's responses to the daunting canvas—frustration on account of the ensuing mental block—are sonically represented as they become increasingly violent outbursts.

Bio: Composer Kyle Shaw writes colorful, energetic music, in acoustic and electroacoustic mediums, tailored to the people and circumstances of their occasions and informed by his performance experience as a pianist and organist. He has presented his work at the Intellectual Worlds of Johannes Brahms International Conference, the Grawemeyer Award's 30th Anniversary Conference, the University of Nebraska's Chamber Music Institute, Electronic Music Midwest, the Studio 300 Digital Arts Festival, the New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, Electronic Music Eastern, and the SEAMUS conference. He has been a finalist for the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, a prize winner of the Belvedere Chamber Music Festival, the American Guild of Organists Composition Competition, and 1st-prize winner of the Iowa State University Carillon Composition Competition and the Vera Hinckley Mayhew Creative Arts Contest. He has been commissioned by the Barlow Endowment, the 17th-annual 21st-Century Piano Competition, and has been a resident fellow at the Osage Arts Community's Mid-Missouri Composers Symposium. He earned his DMA from the University of Illinois and is currently assistant professor of music theory and composition at California State University, Bakersfield.