

Concert Program:

the [Switch~ Ensemble]

University of Texas at Austin Butler School of Music, Telematic Residency

January 22, 2021, 8pm Eastern, 7 CT

www.switchensemble.com

Co-Opt (2020) – Nathan Nokes

Long Nights (2020) – Geli LI

void (2020) – Ian Whillock

Zoetrope (2020) – Monte Taylor

Project Agree: Mission for the Internet Communities (2020) – Lydia Wayne Chang

All works performed by the [Switch~ Ensemble] telematically on December 1 & 2, 2020.

These works are the culmination of a semester-long project with the [Switch~ Ensemble] directed by Visiting Lecturer in Composition and Interim Director of UTEMS, Jason Thorpe Buchanan.

Ensemble:

Madison Greenstone, clarinets

Matt Evans, saxophones

Lauren Cauley, violin

T.J. Borden, cello

Megan Arns, percussion

Jason Thorpe Buchanan, telematic engineer

Christine Elise Chen, guest typer

PROGRAM NOTES & BIOGRAPHIES

Co-Opt (2020) – Nathan Nokes

Nathan Nokes is a composer, performer and sound artist, whose works contrast between evocative freeform expression, and dynamic processes driven structures. Working in acoustic, and electroacoustic mediums as well as interdisciplinary mediums, he has written for concert stage, dance, installation-performance works and multimedia installations. As a performer he explores the use of electronics in improvisation, including the use of live sampling, digital processing as well as analog synthesis. Works of his have been performed by members of ensembles such as Wet Ink, Loadbang, Mise-en, Ulysses European Ensemble, and Invoke Quartet. His music and sound installations have been featured in concert series such as International Saxophone Symposium (VA), Fusebox Festival (TX), New Voices Festival at COA (Washington DC), Foot in the Door (CT), Cohen New Works Festival (TX), Electric LaTex (LA), and Festival of Contemporary Art Music (WA). His fellowships, scholarships, and residencies include the Kent Kennan Graduate Fellowship (TX), I-Park Foundation (CT), Nief-Norf Technology Fellowship (TN), Hartt Talent Scholarship (CT), and The Walden School (NH). He received his M.M. in composition from Hartt School of music at the University of Hartford, and B.M. in Composition from Washington State University.

He is currently a graduate fellow, composition D.M.A student and at the University of Texas in Austin.

When I wrote *Co-opt* I was thinking about the function of language as an ideological and cultural identifier. Particularly how terms and phrases develop specific meanings and functions that go beyond the words themselves. Phrases can be an indication of identity, ideology, political preferences. But this additional layer of meaning can often be co-opted and stretched to fit ideas that are antithetical to their original cultural function. Word choice can be worn like a sheep's clothing. It can be adapted to fit ulterior agendas because of its adapt ability to subtly alter perceptions of truth and reality. Co-opt explores these ideas by playing with the audience's perception through visual and timbral cues. As well as pushing the rhythmic limitations of what can be performed synchronously in a telematic environment. My hope is that the audience will question the relationship between what they hear and what they see during the performance.

- Nathan Nokes

***void* – Ian Whillock**

Ian Whillock is a composer, audio engineer, and percussionist based out of Austin, Texas. His compositional work can be described as abrasive, spontaneous, and sensitive. In summer 2020, Ian released his commercial debut: *Salt Creek Recomposed*. Other recent features include a collaboration with animator Chase Mack and percussionist George Warner on *from fields to skies* for bass drum and electronics, the premiere of *drifting music* for Transient Canvas, and production of *Chance The Dog (The Song)* by the Kraken Quartet featured on the 2020 NPR SXSW Artist Showcase. A founding member of LNK New Music Collective, Ian actively collaborated with other composers and artists to bring contemporary music to new audiences and venues in Lincoln, Nebraska. Highlights with the LNK New Music Collective include collaborations with painter Natalia Kraviec and Variasi Music to produce new works based on her painting *Rich in Love*, with percussionist Louis Raymond-Kolker to produce five new solos for steelpan (double seconds), and with the UNL Dance Studio to produce a concert with the Sheldon Art Museum. In 2018, Ian was the recipient of the Ida M. Vreeland Award from the Glenn Korff School of Music for achievements in musical composition. Outside of composing, Ian is the audio engineer in the production company, Blank House Media. As an audio engineer, Ian focuses on capturing new compositions. He has worked with a wide variety of artists including Mark Ford and Paul Rennick, Texas Christian University, Adam Silverman, and Dave Molk. Ian is currently pursuing Master's in Music Composition at the University of Texas at Austin Butler School of Music. He holds a Bachelor of Music in Composition from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Ian has studied composition with Christopher Trapani, Januibe Tejera, Jason Thorpe Buchanan, Yevgeniy Sharlat, Greg Simon, and Kurt Knecht, and percussion with Dave Hall.

void was composed as part of a collaboration with [Switch~ Ensemble] and constructed for a telematic, socially-distanced performance. *void* explores human interaction mediated through a digital medium. When communicating only in this manner, there is always an unshakeable, residual emptiness that follows each interaction. To explore this idea, I created an interactive graphic score

that is improvised in real-time by an iPad performer. In addition to the graphic score, the iPad performer also improvises the electronics. The instructions given to the performers require them to listen to the other members and react to the constantly changing environment. Each performance will be different, and the performers will be sight-reading each performance. Given the complexity of the entire system and the countless variables of performing over the internet, there will always be a disconnect between the intentions of the laptop performer, the response of the player, and the overall effect on the audience. This disconnect is where the essence of the piece lies: regardless of how interactive and connected we can become through technology, we are still isolated and detached, communicating into the void.

– Ian Whillock

***Long Nights* – Geli LI**

Geli LI (b.1992) is a composer and pianist who straddles both Eastern cultures and Western cultures, and explores the intersection and relationship of literature, philosophy and other arts to shape personal musical vocabulary. Her music has been performed internationally by leading artists including Hub New Music, Chamber orchestra-Jahrhundert-xx-Österreich, NOMAD Tokyo, Altiusin quartet, Chamber orchestra Klangforum Wien, Berlin Zafraan Ensemble, Beijing Modern Ensemble, China Broadcast Traditional Orchestra, Central Conservatory Symphony Orchestra and China Youth Symphony Orchestra. She also worked with a great number of conductors and composers including Peter Burwik, Manuel Nauri, Norman Huynh, Bright SHENG and among others. Since 2012, she has received awards and prizes in composition competition more than ten times. In 2017 Geli was a Composer Fellow at the Intimacy of Creativity Chamber Music Festival at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. In 2019, one of her orchestral works *Stray Birds* was selected in Oregon Symphony Composition Workshop. Geli earned her bachelor's and master's degree in Composition at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China. From 2014-2015, she was educated at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg under Elmar Lampson. In 2020, she has started her new journey of doctorate in Music Composition at the University of Texas at Austin with Professor Donald Grantham.

Long Nights, was composed in the second half of 2020. In this composition, the percussion is considered playing the leading part among the rest of the instruments. Exploring different kinds of resonance and timbre in the Tam-tam, the suspended cymbal, and the Chinese gong, the percussionist is asked to utilize various mallets and subjects (such as coins, bows, banjo picks, fingers, palms) to interact with the percussion instruments in different places on the instruments with different pressure and speed. The sound effect produced by the super ball scraped on the Tam-tam creating the atmosphere of the ominous nights; the biting sounds coming from the tremolos on the Tam-tam feels like the heart beats when people are scared; the resonance from bowing the gong and the suspended cymbal provide the imagination of the facial expressions of excessively panic-stricken. In terms of the performance techniques of the clarinet and alto saxophone, they are mostly based on the multiphonics, in which I found the delicate and vulnerable sound that I want to express as light and hope in the long nights. Additionally, the harmonic texture with scratch tone served as the pedal-note in the cello part integrated with the other instruments that give a feeling of spaciousness in the music.

– Geli LI

Zoetrope – Monte Taylor

Monte Taylor (b.1991) is a composer, guitarist, and improviser based in Austin, TX. He is the 2nd place recipient of the 2020 KLANG! International Electroacoustic Composition Competition. His works have been performed on festivals including Australian Percussion Gathering, Charlotte New Music Festival, Electric LaTex Festival, Electronic Music Midwest, Florida Electro-Acoustic Student Festival, Florida International Toy Piano Festival, Kansas City Art Institute's ArtSounds, National Student Electronic Music Event, New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, SCI Regional and National Student Conferences, SEAMUS National Conference, Seoul International Computer Music Festival, SPLICE Institute, TUTTI Festival, USF International New Music Festival, and UTEMS Electro-Acoustic Recital Series, by ensembles including Bent Frequency, Compositum Musicae Novae, Frost Electronic Music Ensemble, Passepartout Duo, and the University of Texas New Music Ensemble. He is currently finishing a DMA in Composition from the University of Texas at Austin, where he is a staff member for the University of Texas Electronic Music Studios.

A zoetrope is a rudimentary form of animation wherein a sequence of images are placed on the inside of a rotating cylinder, and viewed through narrow slits on the side of the cylinder, giving the viewer the impression of a moving image. As such, Zoetrope uses the inherent limitations of telematic performance as the proverbial slits in which to view the quartet, creating the illusion of a hyperreal ensemble. Zoetrope examines the impact of telecommunication on our lives, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, exploring how the limitations of telecommunications hinder our ability to properly communicate with one another, allow us to present curated public images of ourselves, and further alienate us from the product of our labor. In a traditional electroacoustic concert setting, the listener hears the original, acoustic sound source along with any digital signal processing applied to that source. In a telematic performance, the performers do not occupy the same physical space as the listener, so the original acoustic signal can be removed from the performance entirely, leaving only the processed sounds on their own. The inability to hear the other musicians' original sound, combined with the latency of telematic performance, creates an environment wherein each member of the quartet must continuously compensate for limitations placed on them by the very technology that allows them to perform remotely in the first place.

– Monte Taylor

Project Agree: Mission for the Internet Communities – Lydia Wayne Chang

Born in the United States and raised in Taiwan, Lydia recently finished their master's degree in composition under the tutelage of Susan Botti at Manhattan School of Music, and now pursues their doctoral degree in composition at University of Texas in Austin. During their undergraduate studies at National Taiwan Normal University, they were both manager and composer with the New Music Ensemble, and presented piano recitals. Lydia writes based on the belief that composers are touched by their own music first in order to communicate deep meaning to the audience. Lydia's music has been described as a fusion of nature and expressive harmony. Recently, they start studying acting as an actor. Because of this influence, their compositions include more significance of circumstances and theatrical movement for the performers. Their works have been presented on programs in New York and Taiwan. Lydia continues to develop their passion for the creation of work, voice, instruments, theatre, and electronics, which capture the fragments of the adventure in this finite time

and space. Through their work, Lydia gleans experiences that heighten the awareness of liberty of diversification and advocates accepting the simultaneity of feeling and reacting to and understanding one's surroundings.

The online "chatroom" aspect of this piece is representative of a space on the internet where people talk to each other anonymously; since people are unable to see each others' immediate reactions or facial expressions, they are more free to express themselves without hesitation and tend to say things explicitly and directly. There are three laptop performers as typers who have a "chatroom" conversational debate which is streamed in real-time. In order to present the structure and natural tendencies of online conversation, the three typers type generic words which are descriptive of an online chatroom's changing atmosphere. These words, however, do not specify any particular topic they are discussing. To focus more on the reactions and tension between the typers' conversations, the language they use is similar to stage directions written for theatrical play. Certain keywords typed will trigger sound playback, which are representative of the reactions of the typer behind the screen. The instrumentalists have theatrical actions and spoken text to convey the absence of the visual reactions of the typers.

– Lydia Wayne Chang

the [Switch~ Ensemble]

A new music ensemble for the 21st Century, the [Switch~ Ensemble] is dedicated to the creation of new works for chamber ensemble: we bring bold new acoustic, electroacoustic, and multimedia projects to life. At the core of each performance is our commitment to the total integration of technology and live musicians. We strive for compelling artistry achieved through the seamless creation, production, and execution of new music, and believe that working directly with composers—in a medium where the score is a point of departure rather than a finish line—allows for new and thrilling musical possibilities.

[Switch~] contributes to the future of the genre by strongly advocating for and commissioning the music of a new generation of emerging young composers. We have enjoyed fruitful collaborations with both emerging and established composers, with commissions and premieres of works by composers including Anna-Louise Walton, Aican Çamci, Igor Santos, Katherine Young, Stefano Gervasoni, Stefan Prins, Wojtek Blecharz, Anthony Vine, Rand Steiger, Philippe Leroux, Timothy McCormack, Tonia Ko, James Bean, Matt Sargent, Marianthi Papalexandri-Alexandri, Esaias Järnegard, Sivan Eldar, Julio Zúñiga, Zeynep Toraman, Alexander Schubert, Adrien Trybucki, Elvira Garifzyanova, Santiago Diez-Fischer, Lisa Streich, Anthony Pateras, and many others.

Recent engagements include performances and residencies at Cornell, Bard College, University of Chicago, Ithaca College, Buffalo State, UC Berkeley, the VIPA Festival (Spain), Eastman School of Music, and Avaloch Farms Music Institute, as well as concerts at the Image/Sound Festival, San Francisco Center for New Music, MATA Interval Series, NYCMEF, Vanguard New Music Series at Kent State University, the Queens New Music Festival, the CD release of Christopher Chandler's *Smoke and Mirrors* on the SEAMUS label, and more.

2019-20 season highlights include a workshop and performance at UC San Diego for a new commission by Katharina Rosenberger; the premiere of her work at the DiMenna Center in New York City; a return engagement at Eastman Audio Research Studio; and residencies with Harvard Group for New Music, Miami's Frost School of Music, and the SPLICE Institute.

Founded in 2012 at the Eastman School of Music, the [Switch~ Ensemble] looks toward the future of contemporary music. We are dedicated to performing high-level chamber music integrated with cutting-edge technology and supporting emerging and early career composers. We are passionate about helping to build a diverse canon of 21st century works that leaves space for all voices—especially those that have historically been excluded from our field.

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