FIFTY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

PERFORMANCES OF NEW MUSIC I:
ELECTROACOUSTIC SCORES

Thomas Wells • Concert Manager

Thursday, November 5, 2015
2:00 p.m.
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
ICTC Building, Room 071
Indianapolis, Indiana
Let’s Keep it That Way ...............................  Jay C. Batzner (Central Michigan University)
Kai Johnson, percussion

I am an avid reader of comic books and one of my all-time favorite series is “Planetary” by Warren Ellis and John Cassaday. One of the main characters in the series is The Drummer, a man who can control the flow of energy and information with drumsticks. By drumming on computers, televisions, or electrical panels The Drummer can move, shape, and bend the forces to his liking. This piece does a similar thing with chaotic and random synth textures becoming transformed and shaped as the percussion soloist plays. In addition to the synth textures, I’ve used recordings of my father and I doing some carpentry work in his garage on summer. The power tools (and our captured conversations) are another stream in this “control and shape things” metaphor.

Mbira ..........................................................  Jim Rhinehart (Ball State University)
Jim Rhinehart, mbira

Mbira is a piece using both fixed and live-processed audio. All fixed audio is derived from two mbiras (African thumb pianos). These same two mbiras are used in the largely improvisatory live performance.

ahalugisdi unole (to quiet the wind) .............................. Thomas J. Dempster (South Carolina State University)
Thomas J. Dempster, bassoon

Inspired by a painting by America Meredith, ahalugisdi unole—as a work of visual art—chronicles a small slice of imagined activity and movement within a patch of forest that may not last much longer. Taking inspiration from her Cherokee ancestry and the numerous folk tales that proliferate Cherokee heritage, Meredith’s painting displays a singing bear— at once quirky and majestic—nearly blending in with an affected woodgrain background. On the right hand side of the painting is a clenched fist with a bent wrist, suggesting a violence directed at the sounds and sights of nature, in a manner befitting a Terry Gilliam illustration, though the bent wrist suggests the human interloper will not make it out of the keruffle unscathed. Mankind wants to quash the voices of nature and silence it, if for nothing else, to end the inconvenience. Why else harm a singing bear?

The bassoon plays numerous roles in the work, accompanied by and in dialogue with a rich array of digital sounds, all extracted from the bassoon. The live performer shifts from embodying the mystery and quiet grandeur of nature, to the mechanizations and rhythms of human interference, to the open, marvelous choirs of nature at greenest flush. The electronic sounds span from representing birds, frogs, humans, and the wind.

Child’s Play .................................................  Jason Bolte (Montana State University)

Child’s Play is the third piece in a series of electroacoustic works that explore sonic materials derived from my daughter’s (Lila’s) toys. For each work in the series, I set out to explore a different aspect of her play. In Child’s Play, rhythm is the underlying focus of the work. Since I continued to work with the same set of materials for all three pieces, the resultant derivatives of the original recordings became more and more abstract with each successive composition. In Child’s Play, most of the material is so far removed from the original source recording, that it is nearly impossible to identify. The one exception to this rule is a child’s “Squeaky Toy,” which is presented in an unaltered state halfway through the composition. The “Squeaky Toy” informs the majority of the rhythmic structures found in the work.

Although derived from the “Squeaky Toy,” the rhythmic and harmonic aspects of the work are also heavily influenced by more “popular” styles of electronic music. I have found that one of the absolute wonderful perks of teaching in a university environment is the opportunity to be exposed to styles of music, including more “popular” styles, that would have never entered my ears if it were not for my students and their eclectic musical interests.
**Deep Winter** ............................................... Mark D. Volker (Belmont University)  
John McMurtery, flute

Although it begins with a three-minute, flute-tacet electronics section, the flute player performs the balance of *Deep Winter* quite independent of the electronic part. As notated in the score, after the initial flute entrance, the player does not look for any cues from the electronics. He or she performs from this point on as if playing a solo flute piece. The electronics respond and interact to the player. The flute player controls all tempos, pauses, ritards, accelerandos, etc. simply through his or her performance.

*Deep Winter* is an abstract musical drama set in an intense but radiant snowscape. It is the stylized record of a journey through a frozen world. The perspective moves from muted, sheltered positions to wild rushes through a snowstorm. As an interactive piece in which a computer has been programmed to respond to the live performance, the flute player is in control of tempo and expression for most of *Deep Winter*. The computer listens to the flute player and compares what it hears to a programmed score. At certain places in the score, the computer responds by implementing programmed musical events. These events include custom-designed software “instruments” as well as processing of the live flute sound. The programming and voices were generated using the software package MAX/MSP.

**Il Prete Rosso (2014), for amplified violin, motion sensor, and computer** ....................... Charles Nichols (Virginia Tech)

Sarah Plum, amplified violin  
Charles Nichols, computer

*Il Prete Rosso*, for amplified violin, motion sensor, and interactive computer music, was inspired by the violin concertos of Italian Baroque composer and virtuoso violinist Antonio Vivaldi, who was nicknamed The Red Priest, because of his red hair and Catholic ordination. In the piece, the amplified violin is recorded live and played back in four parts, spatialized around the audience, as an accompaniment with itself. A motion sensor on the wrist of the violinist tracks bow arm performance gesture, to interactively control audio effects in the computer.

**To Unformed** ............................................... Kyong Mee Choi (Roosevelt University)  
Jeff Manchur, piano

This piece is inspired by Thich Nhat Hanh’s book, “No Death, No Fear.” He describes life and death by saying, “When conditions are sufficient we manifest and when conditions are not sufficient we go into hiding.” To *Unformed* attempts to depict Thich Nhat Hanh’s idea musically by using the same musical material to express Hahn’s idea of “manifestation” and “hiding.”
Batzner, Jay C.
Jay C. Batzner (b. 1974) is on the faculty of Central Michigan University where he teaches theory, composition, and technology courses. Prior to this position he served on the faculty of the University of Central Florida and at several community colleges in the Kansas City metropolitan area. He earned his doctorate in composition at the University of Missouri – Kansas City in 2006 and holds degrees in composition and/or theory from the University of Louisville and the University of Kansas. Jay practices zazen, reads comic books, geeks out about sci-fi stuff, sews clothes, brews beer, and juggles.

Bolte, Jason
Jason Bolte is a composer of acoustic and electroacoustic music. He currently resides in Bozeman, Montana with his wonderful wife Barbara and their two daughters, Lila and Megan. Jason teaches music technology and composition at Montana State University where he directs the MONtana State Transmedia and Electroacoustic Realization (MONSTER) Studios. He is a member of the organizational board of the Electronic Music Midwest Festival, and a founding board member of the Kansas City Electronic Music and Arts Alliance. Jason earned a B.M. with an emphasis in Music Engineering Technology and a M.M. in Music Composition from Ball State University. He holds a D.M.A. in Music Composition from the University of Missouri - Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance, where he was a Chancellor's Doctoral Research Fellow, a School of Graduate Studies Dean's Doctoral Fellow, and an Ovation Scholar. Before joining the faculty at MSU, Jason taught at the University of Central Missouri and the Kansas City Kansas Community College. Jason’s music is available on the ALBAZE records, ELECTRO<>ACÚSTICO, SEAMUS, Irritable Hedgehog, Vox Novus, SoundWalk, and Miso Records labels.

Choi, Kyong Mee
Kyong Mee Choi, composer, organist, painter, and visual artist, received several prestigious awards and grants including John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, Robert Helps Prize, Aaron Copland Award, Illinois Arts Council Fellowship, First prize of ASCAP/SEAMUS Award, Second prize at VI Concurso Internacional de Música Eletroacústica de São Paulo, Honorary Mentions from Musique et d’Art Sonore Electroacoustiques de Bourges, Musica Nova, Society of Electroacoustic Music of Czech Republic, Luigi Russolo International Competition, and Destellos Competition. She was a Finalist of the Contest for the International Contemporary Music Contest “Citta’ di Udine and Concurso Internacional de Composicai eletroacoustica in Brazil among others. Her music was published at CIMESP (São Paulo, Brazil), SCI, EMS, ERM media, SEAMUS, and Détontants Voyages (Studio Forum, France). Ravello records published her multimedia opera, THE ETERNAL TAO, which was supported by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and Roosevelt University. Aucourant Records published her CD, SORI, featuring her eight compositions for solo instrument and electronics. The project was supported by the IAS Artist Project Grant from the Illinois Arts Council. She is an Associate Professor of Music Composition at Roosevelt University in Chicago where she teaches composition and electro-acoustic music. [www.kyongmeechoi.com]
Dempster, Thomas J.

Thomas Dempster is a composer living near Columbia, South Carolina. His music has been performed widely, including festivals at the University of Kentucky, Indiana State University, and the University of Nebraska at Kearney; and, festivals and conferences of GEMDays [UK], Di_Stanze [Italy], Toronto International Electroacoustic Symposium, the San Francisco New Music Festival, Electronic Music Midwest, Electroacoustic Barn Dance, NYCEMF, ICMC, SEAMUS, Society of Composers Inc., the College Music Society, the National Flute Association, the North American Saxophone Alliance, and many more. Dempster is a recipient of awards, honors, and grants from BMI, ASCAP, the South Carolina Arts Commission, the South Carolina Music Teachers Association, Sigma Alpha Iota, Ithaca College, Black House Collective, Vox Novus, and the Columbia (SC) Museum of Art. He has received commissions from the Greenbrook Ensemble, the Blue Mountain Ensemble, the Governor’s School of North Carolina, the Ohio State University New Music Ensemble, South Carolina State University, and others. Several of his works are commercially available from Potenza Music Publishing.

Dempster serves as an Assistant Professor of Music at South Carolina State University in Orangeburg, SC, where he teaches courses in music technology, composition and theory, and music business. He directs the BulldogBytes Concert Series at SC State, an annual concert series devoted to experimental and digital music. He is an assistant editor with Jasper Magazine (Columbia, SC), and a CD reviewer for the Society of Electroacoustic Music in the United States. He studied at the University of Texas (MM, DMA) and at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (BM). [www.thomasdempster.com]

Nichols, Charles

Composer, violinist, and computer music researcher, Charles Nichols explores the expressive potential of instrumental ensembles, computer music systems, and combinations of the two, for the concert stage, and collaborations with dance and video, and teaches Composition and Computer Music at Virginia Tech. His recent premieres include Nicolo, Jimi, and John, a concerto for amplified viola, interactive computer effects, and orchestra, three movements based on the virtuosity of Paganini, Hendrix, and Coltrane, and Sound of Rivers: Stone Drum, a multimedia collaboration, with sonified data, electric violin, and computer-processed sound, accompanying narrated poetry, dance, animation, and computer-processed video, based on scientific research into how stoneflies navigate throughout their lifecycles, by the sound of rivers.

Rhinehart, Jim

Jim Rhinehart is a multifaceted composer, pianist, and educator active in both concert and commercial music. Jim holds degrees in Theory and Composition from Central Michigan University (BM) and Ball State University (DA), as well as a Master’s degree in Music Education from Florida State University. Dr. Rhinehart has had works performed at numerous new music festivals, Electronic Music Midwest, the Electroacoustic Barn Dance, and the Society of Composers, Inc., national and regional conferences and festivals. When not doing music, Jim enjoys charcuterie and fly fishing.

Volker, Mark D.

Mark Volker is the Coordinator of Composition and Associate Professor of Music at the Belmont University School of Music, where he teaches applied composition and music theory, and directs the New Music Ensemble. Known for his colorful harmonic language and orchestration, as well as his facility with both electronic and traditional instrumentations, Mark’s music has been performed and recorded by numerous performers around the world, including the Chicago Contemporary Chamber Players, eighth blackbird, the Pacifica String Quartet, Musica moderna Poland, the New York New Music Ensemble, the Kiev Philharmonic, the Orchestra of the Finger Lakes, So Percussion, the Orquesta de Baja California, the Boston Brass, the Society for New Music, the Opera Company of New England, and the Nashville Ballet. Named 2012 Composer of the Year by the Tennessee Music Teachers Association, he has also received awards from ASCAP, Meet the Composer, SCI, and ERMmedia. You can hear Mark’s music on his recently released Centaur Records CD, Elemental Forces, and on volume 3 of ERMmedia’s Masterworks of the New Era series.

Mark is also an active guitarist, specializing in the performance of new music for classical and electric guitar in chamber settings. A native of Buffalo, NY, Mark holds degrees from the Ithaca College School of Music (BM), the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (MM), and the University of Chicago (PhD). He now lives in Franklin, TN with his wife Alyssa and two children, Molly and Jacob.
Dempster, Thomas J.
see composer bio above.

Johnson, Kai
Percussionist Kai Johnson draws on a diverse and eclectic background of musical tastes and performances. In addition to his roles as principal percussionist with both the Central Michigan University Symphonic Wind Ensemble and Symphony Orchestra, he performs regularly with the CMU Percussion Ensemble and CMU New Music Ensemble. As an advocate for new music Kai has premiered several works from such composers as David Gillingham, Frank Nawrot, Mike Romaniak, and Ryan Elvert, and he is always looking for the opportunity to collaborate with new composers. Recent engagements include The Cleveland Institute of Arts’ production of John Luther Adams’ “Inukshuit” at the Lakeside Cemetery in downtown Cleveland and two weeks of performance and study at the 2014 iteration of the Chosen Vale International Percussion Seminar in Enfield, NH. Currently, Kai is based out of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, completing his studies at Central Michigan University with Dr. Andrew Spencer.

Manchur, Jeff
Between performances in converted warehouses, basements, bars, art museums, sculpture gardens and traditional concert halls, wearing tuxedos with tails or jeans and sock feet, Jeff Manchur is committed to creating diverse and challenging musical experiences for audiences across the United States and Canada. He has performed Morton Feldman’s iconic 4 hour and 45 minute-long “For Philip Guston” with Chamber Cartel in Atlanta and regularly performs on the toy piano (he owns two), appearing at the BGSU, Studio 300 and Tutti New Music festivals. His solo piano performances span from premieres of works by Garrett Hope to his personal takes on the classics of Beethoven, the drama of Wuorinen to the passion of Liszt, the eclecticism of Rzewski to the refinement of Debussy.

Jeff’s playing has been rewarded at the 2013 BGSU Concerto Competition (winner in the Graduate Division with Schnittke’s Concerto for Piano and Strings) and the Dr Marjorie Conrad Art Song Competition (first place, 2013) for his collaboration with soprano Fidelia Esther Darmahkasih. He performed with the Chiara String Quartet as a finalist in the “Play with the Chiaras” competition (2012) and represented Nebraska in the MTNA Young Artist competition as their state winner (2011). Most recently, he has received an educational grant from the Manitoba Arts Council and in 2014, served as an artist in residence at both the Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts in Saratoga, Wyoming and the Hambidge Center in Rabun Gap, Georgia.

Nichols, Charles
see composer bio above.

Plum, Sarah
Sarah Plum began her performing career by winning first prize at the International Stulberg Competition in 1984. Her performances have been praised as “consistently stunning with works that demanded conventional virtuosity but also great skill in unconventional techniques” (third coast journal) and “extraordinary, meaningful and magnificent music” (Berlin Tageszeitung).

As a new music specialist Plum has performed worldwide at festivals and venues such as Ars Musica (Brussels), Cite de Musique (Paris), Ankunft:Neue Musik (Berlin), Unruly Music (Milwaukee) Spectrum (New York) and The Luzern Festival among others as a soloist and with noted ensembles. In the past 3 years alone Plum has commissioned Sidney Corbett, Christopher Adler, Laurie Schwartz, Mari Kimura, Sidney Boquiren, Mari Takano, Charles Nichols and Jeff Herriot to write pieces for her. Plum’s collaborations with composers have led to projects such as her CD Absconditus, music of Sidney Corbett for violin, which was called “A gem” by the American Record Guide.

Recently, Plum recorded a violin concerto written for her by Christopher Adler with San Diego New Music and conductor Nicholas Deyoe. Her recording of the music of Bartok for violin and piano with Timothy Lovelace will be released in early 2015 on the Bluegriffin label.
Rhinehart, Jim
see composer bio above.

McMurtery, John
John McMurtery is section flutist of the New York City Opera Orchestra, principal flutist with the Opera Orchestra of New York, flutist with the Luna Nova Ensemble, and Assistant Professor of Music at Western Illinois University. During the 2011–12 season he served as acting piccoloist with the Oregon Symphony. He has performed regularly with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and the New Jersey Symphony. As soloist, Dr. McMurtery has appeared with the New York Symphonic Ensemble, the Artemis Chamber Ensemble, and the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra. In recent seasons, McMurtery has also been invited to tour extensively throughout Europe, performing recitals in France, Germany, Austria, Italy, and the Czech Republic.

Previous teaching appointments include The University of Nevada – Las Vegas, Westminster Conservatory Young Artist Program, and Drew University Summer Music. He taught studio flute at the Lucy Moses School in New York City, and is a past president of the New York Flute Club. Dr. McMurtery earned his DMA from the Juilliard School (where he studied with Jeanne Baxtresser and Julius Baker), MM from Rutgers University (Bart Feller), and BM from Central Washington University (Dr. Hal Ott).