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The Department of Music presents Shinkoskey Noon Concert

Graduate Composers

with
Hrabba Atladottir, violin, and Michael Seth Orland, piano

Program

XY
Sonata for Violin and Piano
Two Preludes for Solo Piano
Strange Alchemy
Flux
Madrugada

Ching-Yi Wang
Scott Perry
Garrett Shatzer
Ben Irwin
Hendel Almétus
Gabriel José Bolaños Chamorro

Thursday, May 5, 2011 • 12:05 pm
Room 115, Music Building

We ask that you be courteous to your fellow audience members and the performers. Please turn off your cell phones and refrain from texting. Audience members who are distracting to their neighbors or the performers in any way may be asked to leave at any time. Also, this performance is being professionally recorded for the university archive. Photography, audio, or audiovisual recording is prohibited during the performance.
**XY** contains two sections and the beginning of each section is largely introspective. Although the piece is for violin and piano, I considered them as one part in general: the identical material played on two instruments by turns. The title of this piece is inspired by the idea of a coordinate system. In a coordinate system, the coordinates of a point are the signed distance to the two perpendicular lines: x and y. The x and y coordinates are two different dimensions, but indispensable to create coordinates for any point. In this duo, the two instruments are different and individual in nature, but they imitate each other and integrate together to make a musical idea clear and distinctive. I recently became very fond of making use of the simple material in my compositions.

**Sonata for Violin and Piano** uses the three-movement sonata form of Classical-era Vienna. In the first movement there is a first theme, a transition, and a second theme followed by development and recapitulation. The second movement veers off a bit from the Classical form in as much as it is a set of variations without a theme. The third movement is a five-part rondo in seven-eight meter. The basic impulse behind this piece was to use complex and nontonal material in short forms that looked back to the short Viennese sonata. However, I, as many musicians within academia tend to do, sought to use these forms as means toward musicality. On a personal musical level I feel a bit as though there is something backward looking in this “Sonata.” When I was a younger composer I would have given my arm to have written this piece. I like the piece a great deal but feel as though it is expressing past states of being. I hope you enjoy its sour ambiguity.

**Prelude No. 1,** “Presbite,” and **Prelude No. 4,** “Sleeve”: Prelude No. 1 was written in just four hours while I was in Rome in 2006. I had just received news that my Italian grandmother had passed away, and due to other circumstances I was not able to return home for her funeral. Prelude No. 4—or at least the present version of it—was begun in 2006 and updated in 2011. It is an homage to my influences, and its sections are labeled “Chopin,” “Liszt,” and “Bach.”

The first movement of **Strange Alchemy** is predominantly lyrical and features more sustained textures. Melody and harmony are treated very freely with regard to register: melodies include pitches that are registrally far apart (as in the opening violin solo), and harmonies include notes that are very close together and have a stark, dissonant sound (as we hear in the second piano entrance). The second movement is mercurial in character. Formally, it is a string of many short contrasting episodes. As a balance to these contrasts, there is an audible melodic thread that runs across the episodes and through the entire movement. This melodic thread and the surrounding musical fabric were constructed using recurring and carefully controlled musical patterns; these patterns create a link between episodes, even between episodes with very different characters. It is my hope that the linking effect of these patterns is largely subconscious; I would like them to be “felt” more than “heard.”

The raw pitch materials, or synthetic keys, for both movements, were generated precompositionally using successive mappings of subsets of one “12-tone row” (more accurately, an ordering of the chromatic aggregate) onto another, complete “row.” This yields a rich palette of materials that can be thought of in conventional terms (as keys, scales, and chords) and operated on in conventional ways (sequenced, inverted, retrograded, modulated or transposed, etc.). Yet because the creation and manipulation of materials occur through the mapping of one pitch structure onto another, rather than by direct manipulation of interval content (what we might call a second-order as opposed to first-order operation), the relationships between materials can be heard, deliberately controlled, and systematically organized. Yet the source of these relationships is mysterious: it cannot be divined by listening to the materials themselves, or to the piece. This is the alchemy to which the title refers. And while these alchemically second-order relationships provide the organizational basis for the piece, they do not replace, but rather coexist, often in strange ways, with the familiar first-order relationships, such as register and pitch-interval, that can be immediately perceived and understood.

When I first began precompositional work on this piece, I did the generative subset mapping “by hand,” and this was very time-consuming. Many thanks to Michael Coulombe for writing the computer program that I used to finish the generative mapping. It saved me a lot of time and allowed me to experiment with generative orderings to find particularly satisfying combinations.

**Flux** is a simple piece for violin and piano with a generic three-part form that is fundamentally based on a simple melodic line. In parts of the piece the melodic line can be clearly heard at the surface level of the composition. It is also hidden and not so easily perceivable at the background level of all three sections of the piece. In the first section, segments of the line are spread across the ensemble to create a tightly controlled counterpoint that forms the basis for the narrative discourse of the section. The contrasting second section is more linear and static because of the slow harmonic rhythm, and the long and sustained double stops in the violin over the pointillist piano part. In the third section I was able to combine certain elements of the two previous sections both to create something new and highlight elements that have structural significance in the piece.
Madrugar has a variety of meanings: to wake up very early, to precede or anticipate something, to flow or occur repeatedly in succession, and, finally, to stall or prevent somebody from going somewhere or doing something. It can also be used ironically to mean coming home very late (early?) from a night of partying. All of these meanings informed the way I conceptualized and composed this piece. The opening theme in the solo piano is essentially a madrugada ("dawn")—the rhythmic process and bitonality create an aural ambiguity, making it difficult to tell whether a particular harmony precedes or proceeds another, thus blurring the dichotomies between question/answer, beginning/end, early morning/late evening. The opening rhythmic theme also permeates the piece in different manifestations and helps maintain some cohesion between the disparate musical elements. This piece, however, is not programmatic and does not attempt to reference any extramusical objects or events. This is simply a very personal way of thinking about this music that informed my compositional process.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

A native of Taiwan, Ching-Yi Wang is a doctoral candidate in composition and theory at UC Davis, where she studies composition with Ross Bauer, Pablo Ortiz, Mika Pelo, and Kurt Rohde. She received her BFA, with highest honors, and MFA in theory and composition from Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA), where she was a recipient of an Academic Excellence Scholarship. Wang was a piano accompanist for the dance department at TNUA and has taught at Tainan National University of the Arts. Her music has been performed at the Pacific Rim Festival (USA), soundSCAPE Festival (Italy) as well as GATEways Arts Festival (USA), and by various ensembles, including the Empyrean Ensemble, Del Sol String Quartet, One Art Ensemble and Spring Autumn Ensemble, among others. Her music can be found on the Taiwan Composer League’s “Taiwan Contemporary Composers I: Chamber Music” CD, released in 2007. A recent work, Ancient Dream (for thirteen players), was read by the Alarm Will Sound during the Madness and Music Festival in October 2010. Commissioned by the Taipei Philharmonic Chorus, she is currently working on a choral piece for their 2010–11 season.

Scott Perry (b. 1978) has been studying music and composition formally since 1998. His instructors have been Beverly Grigsby, Jeremy Haladyna, Kurt Rohde, Wolfgang von Schweinitz, Ulrich Krieger, David Rosenboom, and Pablo Ortiz. He currently studies with Mika Pelo. In addition to composing concert and electronic music, he sometimes performs improvisational singing. He also enjoys practicing and studying Buddhism in the Shambhala tradition of Chogyam Trungpa and spending some time on the weekends killing Internet dragons in the Massively Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Game, World of Warcraft.

Garrett Shatzer is a PhD candidate in composition and theory at UC Davis. Holding degrees from the University of Michigan (BFA, Performing Arts Technology, composition emphasis) and the University of Miami (MM, electronic music composition; MM, music theory), he has also had the privilege of studying at Florida State University, Paris (composer fellow, European American Musical Alliance), Buenos Aires (composer fellow, Laboratory of Research and Music Production), Melbourne (composer fellow, International Composers Competition, Italian Institute of Culture), Rome (private student of Luigi Ceccarelli), and Cleveland (composer fellow, Cleveland Composer’s Recording Institute). His principal composition teachers have included Evan Chambers, Erik Santos, Pablo Ortiz, Ross Bauer, Mika Pelo, and Kurt Rohde, and he has had additional lessons with Claude Baker, Narcis Bonet, Francisco Kropfl, and Carlo Forlivesi.

His music has been performed by the Meridian Arts Ensemble, Empyrean Ensemble, Mobius Trio, the Erato Piano Trio, violinist Rolf Schulte, cellist David Russell, and pianist Geoffrey Burleson in venues including the Mondavi Center, Kennedy Center, and Teatro Colón (Buenos Aires). Past commissions include a solo piece for seven-string guitar for guitarist Mason Fish, a guitar trio for the Mobius Trio, and a song for soprano Ann Moss, and current commissions, a song for Grammy-winning countertenor Ian Howell, a guitar trio for the Mobius Trio, a piano trio for the Finisterra Piano Trio, and a triple concerto for the Erato Piano Trio.

Ben Irwin is a doctoral student in composition at UC Davis, where he studies with Pablo Ortiz. His upcoming projects include a large chamber ensemble piece for the Wellesley Composers Conference in Massachusetts.
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Hendel Almétus** is a third-year PhD student in composition at UC Davis. He was born in Haiti where he began his musical training at the age of twelve. He earned a BM in composition from Houston Baptist University and an MA in composition from the Eastman School of Music. At Eastman he developed an interest in computer music, particularly in the area of synthesis and has, since then, used various sound synthesis software for some of his compositions. At the 2008 Image Movement and Sound festival in New York, he collaborated with a film maker and a choreographer in a multimedia work called “Polarity” that was performed at the Rochester Institute of Technology. He has written for ensembles of various sizes that occasionally include electronics. His music has been performed by the Empyrean Ensemble, Schola Cantorum, and various ensembles from the Eastman School of Music.

**Gabriel José Bolaños Chamorro** (b. 1984, Bogotá, Colombia) is a Nicaraguan-American composer and guitarist, currently studying composition with Pablo Ortiz. Now a first-year graduate student in composition at UC Davis, he received his BA from Columbia University in 2007 where he studied composition with Fabien Lévy and Sebastian Currier and orchestration with Tristan Murail. He has also worked as a freelance musician in New Haven, CT, and was professor of theory, analysis, and guitar at the Casa de los Tres Mundos Music Academy in Granada, Nicaragua. His work draws upon a variety of interests including polystylism, spectralism, and the physical properties of sound, psychoacoustics, linguistics, and geology.

**Hrabba Atladottir,** violin, studied in Berlin with Axel Gerhardt. After finishing her studies, Atladottir worked as a freelance violinist in Berlin for five years, regularly playing with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsche Oper, and Deutsche Symphonieorchester. She also participated in a world tour with the Icelandic pop artist Bjork, and a Germany tour with violinist Nigel Kennedy. In 2004 she moved to New York and continued to freelance, playing on a regular basis with the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. She also plays a lot of new music, most recently with the Either/Or ensemble in New York in connection with their Helmut Lachenmann festival. Since August 2008, she has been based in Berkeley, California, and performs with various ensembles, such as the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, Empyrean Ensemble, and the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players to name a few. Atladottir is also a violin lecturer at UC Berkeley.

**Michael Seth Orland** has appeared extensively in the Bay Area as a chamber musician, playing with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Earplay, the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players, New Music Theater, the Empyrean Ensemble, Other Minds, and in the San Francisco Symphony’s New and Unusual Music series. He has performed modern works throughout California, the venues including UC campuses at San Diego, Davis, and Santa Cruz, at Sacramento State University, and Cal Arts. He has also played at June in Buffalo (NY), the Mendocino Music Festival, and in the Gund Series at Kenyon College. Orland may be heard on recordings of contemporary music released by CRI, Centaur, and Capstone.

Orland studied piano with Margaret Kohn in Claremont, CA, and is a graduate of the UC Berkeley music department, where he studied harpsichord with Davitt Moroney and composition with Gérard Grisey. He later continued his study of composition with David Sheinfeld. Orland has appeared often as a freelance symphony musician and has performed many times as a pianist in vocal recitals, as well as in vocal master classes by artists such as Frederica von Stade. Orland teaches in the music departments at UC Berkeley and UC Davis.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**THURSDAY, MAY 12 | 12:05 PM**  
**ROOM 115, MUSIC BUILDING**  
Shinkoskey Noon Concert  
**Mobius Guitar Trio:** Mason Fish, Matthew Holmes-Linder, and Robert Nance  
Free

**SUNDAY, MAY 15 | 7 PM**  
**JACKSON HALL, MONDAVI CENTER**  
UC Davis Symphony Orchestra  
Christian Baldini, music director and conductor  
• **Gershwin:** *Catfish Row* (Suite from *Porgy and Bess*)  
• **Rohde:** *Double-Franken-Trouble-Stein* (world premiere) with Kurt Rohde and Ellen Ruth Rose, viola  
• **Mozart:** Mass in C Minor (“Great Mass”) with the University Chorus $8 STU & CH, $12/15/17 A