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Guest Recital, Trios for Two, September 16, 2016

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Guest Recital

Trios for Two
Molly Gebrian, viola
Danny Holt, piano and percussion

Friday, September 16, 2016
8:00 p.m.
Harper Hall
Theatric No. 8 (2010) Casey Cangelosi (b. 1982)

   The Beginning
   Barbarism
   Familiar Terrain
   In Abstract
   The End


– Short Pause –


   White
   Black
PROGRAM NOTES

Of the works on this concert, Casey Cangelosi’s Theatric No. 8 uses the most pared-down instrumentation: the piano is augmented with kick drum and hi-hat. With the composer’s blessing, Danny chose to add snare drum (played with a foot pedal). The piece is an obsessive minimalist exploration. In the composer’s own words: “The driving force and functionality behind Theatric No. 8 is perspective rather than process. Instead of a gradual linear evolution of change, the musical material is treated as a quasi three-dimensional object...As more perspectives are presented, more detail in the musical object is revealed. As time goes on, the interest is no longer on the initial musical object, but in the details discovered.” www.caseycangelosi.com

Second Take, by Karl Blench, grew out of his earlier piece for viola, clarinet, and piano, also commissioned by Molly Gebrian. That piece, Book of Mental Imagery, is a series of nine miniatures, which share a musical language and structure with Second Take. The premiere of Mental Imagery was derailed by the Icelandic volcano that erupted in the spring of 2010, stranding the pianist in Europe and causing the premiere to be delayed indefinitely. Second Take is therefore not only a second look at the musical material from Mental Imagery, but also a second attempt at trying to get this music out into the world. Of this work, the composer writes, “The five movements of Second Take are much like a series of paintings; they can stand alone as small independent works, but are connected by common musical language that binds them together.” www.karlblench.net

Although on the surface, Third Nature by Christopher Goddard appears to be the piece on this concert that is the closest to a traditional viola sonata, it is actually a drama with three (or only two?) different characters. The composer writes: “The violist, pitted against a performer wearing two different hats, seeks to reconcile the two as they spar with one another over the course of the work. While they are placated from time to time, the characters inevitably descend into a frenzied battle, only to emerge without a victor; the mediator is then left to humbly remark on the futility of their efforts.” In many ways, the violist is both the narrator (starting and ending the piece alone) and also a participant in the struggle between the piano and percussion. In addition to the triumvirate who are the characters in this drama, the number 3 is important in other ways. Goddard writes: “Thirds abound as intervallic material, the music is
comprised of three contrasting characters, and the architecture is quite clearly delineated by three points of climax.”
www.christophergoddard.com

Much of Ingrid Lee’s work explores acoustic sounds that contain elements usually belonging to electronic music. Described by the composer as “an experiment in static motion and controlled chaos,” Nomentum takes full advantage of a broad range of sonic possibilities inherent in Trios for Two. Lee writes that “the possibilities for exploring these sounds in this particular instrumentation are expansive; sounds like the interrupted triangle, the scraped brake drum, and the bow distortion in the viola, which comprises both the complexity of noise and the irregularity in the sound of electromagnetic interference.”
www.ingrideel.com

The two movements of Black and White, by Chiayu, highlight extreme contrasts in character: the first movement (White) is largely consonant and explores different timbres and registers, especially in the viola. In direct contrast, the second movement (Black) is angular and driven, a real tour de force for both instruments. About this piece, the composer writes, “Black and White is inspired by the colors and the symbol of Ying and Yang. In White, the music tries to depict representation of this color as innocence, purity, open, and new beginnings. In Black, the music tries to interpret the ideas of strong, contained, mysterious, and endings. While each movement has its own characteristics, the piece also incorporates the concept that Ying and Yang are contrary forces, but at the same time they complement, interconnect, and interrelate to one another. To reflect this idea, some of the motives can be traced in both movements; however, the different transformations of the motives create the contrasting characteristics in each movement.”
www.chiayuhsu.com

Notes by Molly Gebrian & Danny Holt
PERFORMER BIOS

Violist Molly Gebrian has distinguished herself as an outstanding performer, teacher, and scholar throughout the US and Europe. Her love of contemporary music has led her to collaborate with many composers, often in premieres of works written for her. She has worked closely with the Ensemble Intercontemporain and Pierre Boulez for performances at the Lucerne Festival and she recently spent a year in Paris to undertake an intensive study of contemporary music with the violist/composer Garth Knox. Her other principal teachers have been Peter Slowik, Carol Rodland, and James Dunham. Molly completed her Doctor of Musical Arts in viola performance from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music and also holds graduate degrees in viola performance from the New England Conservatory of Music, and Bachelor degrees from Oberlin College and Conservatory of Music, in both viola performance and neuroscience. She served as the Assistant Director for two interdisciplinary conferences on music and the brain while at Rice, has published papers dealing with music and neuroscience in the Journal of the American Viola Society, Frontiers in Psychology, and Flute Talk Magazine, and teaches an honors course on music and the brain at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. She is also a frequent presenter on topics having to do with music and neuroscience at conferences and universities around the country. Currently, she is Assistant Professor of Viola and Music Theory at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. www.mollygebrian.com

Called “exceptional” by the Los Angeles Times, pianist/percussionist Danny Holt performs across the globe in concert halls (Carnegie Hall, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Hollywood Bowl), clubs (Joe’s Pub, Copenhagen Jazzhouse) art galleries (MASS MoCA, Hammer Museum), churches, living rooms, and wherever else he can find a piano and someone to listen. Known for his no-holds-barred style, he has been called “the classical music equivalent of an extreme sports athlete” (The Record) and Los Angeles City Beat named him one of the “local heroes” of L.A.’s music scene. He specializes in performing contemporary works, 20th century music, and obscure and neglected repertoire from past centuries, often juxtaposing diverse styles in unexpected ways. A specialist in contemporary music, Holt has held fellowships at the Bang On a Can Summer Music Institute, the Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall, and New England Conservatory’s Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance Practice, and he has worked with such composers as Steve Reich, Louis Andriessen, Christian Wolff, James Tenney, Graham Fitkin, David Lang, Michael
Gordon, Augusta Read Thomas, and Michael Finnissy, among others. He also proudly champions the works of emerging composers. Holt has received awards and grants from ASCAP, Yamaha, the American Composers Forum, the Yvar Mikhashoff Trust for New Music, and others. Holt's *Fast Jump* CD (Innova Recordings, 2009) was a featured new release on both WNYC and iTunes, and includes world premiere recordings of works by Pulitzer Prize winning composer David Lang, Caleb Burhans, Lona Kozik, Graham Fitkin, and Jascha Narveson. *Gramophone* called the disc “a compelling showcase for Holt's innate virtuosity and gregarious temperament” and *Sequenza21.com* called Holt's playing “brilliant”.

[www.dannyholt.net](http://www.dannyholt.net)