LOST GIANTS: GEORGE CRUMB, MARIO LAVISTA, AND ALVIN LUCIER

With guest, Trevor Saint

April 22, 2022
7:30 pm
Light Recital Hall
Tilted Arc . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Alvin Lucier (1931-2021)  
  Trevor Saint, percussion

An Idyll of the Misbegotten . . . George Crumb (1929-2022)  
  Cristina Ballatori, flute  
  Tobie Wilkinson, percussion  
  Zach Aide, percussion  
  Maggie Hillock, percussion

Marsias . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mario Lavista (1943-2021)  
  Matthew Sintchak, saxophone  
  Tobie Wilkinson, water glasses  
  Zach Aide, water glasses  
  Maggie Hillock, water glasses  
  Quinn Galvin, water glasses  
  Brandon Terwilliger, water glasses

I am Sitting in a Room . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Alvin Lucier (1931-2021)  
  Trevor Saint, percussion
BIOGRAPHIES

Trevor Saint: (UWW alum) plays the glockenspiel. He performs the first solo works for the extended-range instrument, and improvises wildly with the instrument’s extreme offerings. Trevor performs in the duos Skewed and Such (Jeff Herriott, laptop) and Tanngrisnir (Christopher Burns, electric guitar), and is a founding member of the Ever Present Orchestra, an ensemble dedicated to the work of Alvin Lucier. Since 2015, he was Alvin Lucier’s personal assistant. He spends most of his free time knitting.

In demand internationally as a soloist, chamber recitalist, and clinician, saxophonist Matthew Sintchak’s performances have taken him throughout North America, Asia, and Europe. As an avid supporter of contemporary music, Sintchak has commissioned and premiered over 100 new works for the instrument, including pieces by Joan Tower, Jacob TV, Phil Woods, David Amram, Yehuda Yannay, Roscoe Mitchell, David Dramm, Gunther Schuller, and Yoshihisa Hirano. Besides solo performances, he is a member of the Fuse Trio (saxophone, clarinet, piano) (www.fusetrio.com), the Vent Trio (saxophone, flute, clarinet), the Sonict Duo (saxophone, electronics, video), and Present Music. In the quartet setting, Sintchak has been performing and recording with the Ancia Saxophone Quartet (www.anciaquartet.com) for more than 20 years. Their latest CD, which will feature a newly commissioned work by Grammy-winning composer Libby Larsen, will be released this summer on the Albany label with support from a grant from the Ditson Fund. Sintchak studied at the Eastman School of Music (DMA, MM, Performer’s Certificate), the Paris Conservatory, and the New England Conservatory of Music (BM) under Ramon Ricker, Claude Delangle, Kenneth Radnofsky, and George Garzone. Currently the Professor of Saxophone at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Sintchak is a Conn-Selmer and Vandoren artist/clinician and has recorded for the Naxos, Innova, Albany, Zimbel, and the University of Iowa Composers’ labels.

Tobie L. Wilkinson has been Senior Lecturer of Music/Percussion at UW-Whitewater since 2002. Mr. Wilkinson teaches applied percussion lessons, is assistant director of the UW-Whitewater Warhawk Marching Band, directs the UW-Whitewater Percussion Ensemble, and teaches percussion methods courses for future music educators. He is a frequent adjudicator/clinician and performs as a free-lance percussionist. Currently, he holds the position of Principal Timpanist with the Racine Symphony Orchestra and serves as the Immediate Past-President for the Wisconsin Chapter of the Percussive Arts Society. He received his Bachelor of Music Performance and Bachelor of Music Education degree at Central Michigan University, and his Master of Music degree in Percussion Performance at Rice University in Houston, TX.
BIOGRAPHIES

Cristina Ballatori has performed across the United States, Europe, England, and Latin America as a recitalist, soloist, chamber, and orchestral musician. Recent performance highlights include a featured recital at the World Flutes Festival in Mendoza, Argentina; concerts in venues such as the Atelier Concert Series in Paris, France; “Live from Hochstein” Series public radio WXXI in Rochester, New York; and artist residencies in Spain, Costa Rica, and Mexico. As a chamber musician, Ballatori is a member of the Semplice Duo with pianist Kevin Chance and the Whitewater Chamber Players. Ballatori regularly appears as a guest artist and has been a featured performer, clinician, and adjudicator at many festivals, universities, and conferences including those of the National Flute Association, Music Teachers National Association, Texas Music Educators Association, and Mid-South Flute Society among others. Ballatori is the recipient of numerous awards and grants including the University of Texas System’s Regents’ Outstanding Teaching Award. Ballatori is the Artist Teachers/Associate Professor of Flute at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and Director of the UW-W Flute Camp. She previously served as Associate Professor of Flute at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Her major teachers include Alexa Still, Peter Lloyd, Katherine Kemler, Judith Lapple, and Diane Smith. Visit www.cristinaballatori.com

Jeff Herriott has a joint position in the departments of Music and Communication, is affiliated with the Film Studies program, and serves as the coordinator of the Media Arts and Game Development Program. Jeff’s primary areas of focus as an academic include music composition, various aspects of music technology, and music and sound for film, television, and video games. Jeff’s primary area of research is in music composition. His works, which often include interaction between live performers and electronic sounds, have been described as “colorful...darkly atmospheric” (New York Times) and “incredibly soft, beautiful, and delicate” (Computer Music Journal). Jeff is a recipient of grants and awards from the McKnight Foundation, the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition, the MATA Festival, and the American Music Center, and his music has been released on the Innova, New Focus, Albany, Centaur, and SEAMUS labels.

In addition to his concert music, Jeff has composed score and soundtrack music for feature films including Bone Tomahawk (starring Kurt Russell), Brawl in Cell Block 99, and Dragged Across Concrete (the latter two premiering at the Venice Film Festival). Jeff is also a member of and composer for bands working in diverse styles, including the heavy metal outfit Realmbuilder and the sleepy rock duo Bell Monks.
**Tilted Arc (2018)** for Four Violins, Four Electric Guitars, Piano, Three Alto Saxophones and Solo Bowed Glockenspiel

Over the course of 17 minutes and 30 seconds 12 instrumentalists sweep up and down one octave, in unison canon at 30-second intervals. The glockenspiel player bows long tones toward, across, and away from the instrumentalists’ sweeps. As they do so audible beating is produced, determined by the distances between the instrumental pitches. The farther apart the faster the beating; at unison no beating occurs. An alternate version of the piece for solo bowed glockenspiel and 12 slow sweep pure wave oscillators was written for Trevor Saint. Tilted Arc was written expressly for the Ever Present Orchestra (Bernhard Rietbrock, director; Trevor Saint, glockenspiel soloist), and premiered at Connecting Space in Hong Kong on March 27, 2018. The solo version of Tilted Arc was premiered by Trevor Saint on July 20, 2018, at Issue Project Room in Brooklyn, NY, as part of an event celebrating the Sonic Arts Union. The title of the piece was taken from Richard Serra's sculpture displayed in Foley Federal Plaza in Manhattan from 1981-89.

**An Idyll of the Misbegotten (1986)** for Amplified Flute and Percussion

I feel that 'misbegotten' well describes the fate ful and melancholy predicament of the species 'homo sapiens' at the present moment in time. Mankind has become ever more 'illegitimate' in the natural world of the plants and animals. The ancient sense of brotherhood with all life-forms (so poignantly expressed in the poetry of St. Francis of Assisi) has gradually and relentlessly eroded and consequently we find ourselves monarchs of a dying world. We share the fervent hope that humankind will embrace anew nature's 'moral imperative'. My little 'Idyll' was inspired by these thoughts. Flute and drum are, to me (perhaps by association with ancient ethnic musics), those instruments which most powerfully evoke the voice of nature. I have suggested that ideally (if impractically) my 'Idyll' should be heard 'from afar, over a lake, on a moonlit evening in August'. 'An Idyll for the Misbegotten' evokes the haunting theme of Claude Debussy's 'Syrinx' (for solo flute, 1912). There is also a short quotation from the eighth century Chinese poet Ssu-K'ung Shu: 'The moon goes down. There are shivering birds and withering grasses.'

- George Crumb

**Marsias (1985/2016)** for oboe and water glasses. Adapted for soprano saxophone by Matthew Sintchak

Marsias combines expressive gestures in the oboe (saxophone) with sustained meditative pitches played by eight crystal glasses. The melodic fragments include extended techniques new at the time such as multiphonics, timbral effects, glissandi, harmonics, and the use of a mute. The title of the work comes from the Greek myth of Marsias, who challenged Apollo, the god of music, to a duel of virtuosity. Marsias played the aulos (a double oboe) while Apollo played his lyre. While Marsias played admirably, Apollo punished Marsais’ audacity for challenging a god and flayed him alive! Four lines from a short story by Luis Cernuda are printed at the beginning of the work

Marsias breathed in, breathed out, time and time again across the intertwined reeds achieving sounds more and more sweet and mysterious that were like the secret voice of his heart.

(trans by JR Thompson)
During the spring of 1969 I was living in an apartment on 454 High Street, Middletown. It was a sordid habitat, the kind universities rent to part-time faculty. It had a green shag rug, heavy drapes on the windows and an old armchair. I mention this because it has a lot to do with the acoustics of the room. The kitchen was supplied with one pot and a skillet and a coffee cup. But that was OK; I was by myself and I ate out a lot anyway. One night I borrowed two Nagra tape recorders from the Music Department. They had purchased them for ethnological field recording. At that time Nagra machines were the sine qua non of the recording industry. They were the finest portable reel-to-reel recorders for films and field recording. Any Hollywood Western you ever saw was probably recorded with a Nagra. They were beautiful machines. I had a Beyer microphone, a single KLH loudspeaker and a Dynaco amplifier. I set the mike up in the living room, sat down in the armchair and wrote out a text that explained what I was about to do. In those days, there was a genre of work in which the process of the composition was the content of the work. I remember a Judson Church dancer describing her motions as she was doing them. I decided that the work would have no poetic or aesthetic content. The art was someplace else.

I placed the two machines on a table outside the door so the spinning reels wouldn’t make noise. I unplugged the refrigerator, turned off the heat. I waited until the radiator pipes had cooled and the room got quiet. I waited until after 11 o’clock when a local bar, The Three Coins, closed. It was snowing that night so it was relatively quiet outside. There was not a lot of traffic going by. I went outside into the hallway, turned on one of the Nagras and, returning to the living room, read the text into the microphone. When I was finished, I went back out into the hallway, stopped the machine, rewound the tape and listened to the results through headphones. The levels on the meters were OK. They hadn’t peaked into the red zone that would have indicated distortion. I transferred the tape to the second recorder, which was routed through the amplifier to the loudspeaker, which I had positioned on the chair I had been sitting in. I wanted the copy to sound as much like my original speech as possible. I wanted it to sound as if I were there in person actually talking in the room.

I went back outside the room and played this copy into the room again, recording it on the first recorder. I repeated this procedure until I had sixteen versions, one original and fifteen copies. I stayed up all night doing it. As the process continued more and more of the resonances of the room came forth; the intelligibility of the speech disappeared. Speech became music. It was magical.

I chose speech to test the space because it is rich in sounds. It has fundamental tones (formants) and lots of noisy stuff--p’s, t’s, s’s, k’s. It was crucial to avoid poetic references—poems, prayers, anything with high aesthetic value. I felt that would only get in the way. I wanted the acoustic exploration to be paramount, the room acoustics and its gradual transformation to be the point of the piece.
- Alvin Lucier