

Dublin Sound Lab

in association with Project Arts Centre

presents

OCTOPHONIES

23 October 2010, 8.00 pm

Project Arts Centre, Dublin

Marja Gaynor, *violin*

- Ann Cleare, *IRK* (violin and MaxMSP)
- Scott McLaughlin, *Primes* (violin and MaxMSP)
- Barry Truax, *Riverrun* (8-track 'tape')
- Roderik de Man, *Spazio Piccolo* (violin solo)
- Karen Tanaka, *Wave Mechanics II* (violin and 'tape')

Dublin Sound Lab is a contemporary music performance group specialising in new electroacoustic music and computer-mediated performance. The group was formed in 2008 by organist Michael Quinn and composer Fergal Dowling to promote and perform new and established works by Irish and international composers



Ann Cleare, *IRK* (violin and MaxMSP)

The title *IRK* is suggestive of what I am aiming to do in this piece: to use the bow as an object that can agitate or irk the sound from the instrument's body. This could be anything from barely touching the string to applying much pressure, resulting in an infinite wave of colours from harmonics, into pitch, into noise. I sought to create lines of flowing transitions between noise, pitch, and light-finger-pressure: colour, not pitch, being the principle carrier of line.

Ann Cleare

Ann Cleare is originally from county Offaly. In 2005, she graduated with a B.mus from University College Cork where she was awarded the Mary V. Harte Memorial Prize. In 2008, she received an M.Phil in Composition from UCC, where she studied with John Godfrey and Jesse Ronneau, and also worked as a tutor for two years.

Her music has been performed in various venues across Europe, New Zealand and America by ensembles such as Ensemble SurPlus, 175 East, The Crash Ensemble, and The Callithumpian Consort. Recent and future projects include new works for clarinettist Carol McGonnell and Argento Ensemble, ELISION Ensemble, Quatuor Diotima, and ICE (Harvard residency 2011).

Honors and awards include: College Scholar Title (UCC 2006), The IMRO/Feis Ceoil Composition Competition (2007), The West Cork Chamber Music Festival Composer Awards (2008), Bank of Ireland Millennium Scholar (2009) as well as various grants and bursaries from The Arts Council Ireland and The Arts Office of Offaly County Council. Her piece, "I am not a clockmaker either", was recently short listed for the 2010 Gaudeamus prize.

In 2007, she attended The International Summer Course for Composers at Akademie Schloss Solitude, where she worked with Chaya Czernowin, Steven Kazuo Takasugi, and Ole Ludwig Holm. From 2008 to 2009, she attended the Cursus for Composition and Music Technologies at IRCAM. Ann worked as a resident composer with The Cork International Choral Festival from 2005 to 2008. In September 2009, she commenced a PhD in Composition at Harvard University under the supervision of Chaya Czernowin and Hans Tutschku.

Scott McLaughlin, *Primes* (violin and MaxMSP)

Primes was one of my first pieces to use bounded improvisation; the text score only defines the musical language, giving the player freedom to improvise within these boundaries, as well as deciding on structure and duration. The material given to the player is the harmonic spectrum and two shapes of phrase/contour, as well as instructions on the relationship between them, and the relationship between computer and live player. The title relates to the harmonic background of prime-numbered partials generated in realtime by the computer in response to the **violin**. *Primes* was first performed by Amy Whitwam, St Paul's Hall, Huddersfield, 2005.

Scott McLaughlin was born in Ireland (Co. Clare) in 1975. He playing in indie-rock bands until his mid-twenties, then studied music at the University of Ulster at Jordanstown where he gained a BMus degree in 2001. He completed a PhD at the University of Huddersfield with Pierre Alexandre Tremblay and Bryn Harrison in 2009. Currently, he is an Honorary Visiting Research Fellow at CeReNeM (Uni. of Huddersfield).

His music is concerned with relationships between minimal processes of transformation and proliferation: ideas of recursion, hysteresis, difference, cluster-microtonality, chaos/complexity theory, interactivity. Scott is also an improviser (cello or live electronics), and plays in the pop/alt-folk duo Phantom Dog Beneath the Moon. Recent performances have been given by Sebastian Berweck, Jonathan Sage, Metapraxia Ensemble, Crash Ensemble, Trio Scordatura, and the public attendees at Analogous Projects' ICMC 2010 event in New York.

Barry Truax, *Riverrun* (8-track 'tape')

Riverrun creates a sound environment in which stasis and flux, solidity and movement co-exist in a dynamic balance. The corresponding metaphor is that of a river, always moving yet seemingly permanent. From the smallest rivulet to the fullest force of its mass, a river is formed from a collection of countless droplets and sources. So too with the sound in this composition which bases itself on the smallest possible 'unit' of sound in order to create larger textures and masses. The title is the first word in James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*.

Riverrun is entirely realized with the method of sound production known as granular synthesis. With this method small units or 'grains' of sound are produced, usually with very high densities (100-2000 grains/sec), with each grain having a separately defined frequency and duration. When the grains all have similar parameters, the result is a pitched and amplitude modulated sound, but when random variation is allowed in a parameter, a broad-band noise component is introduced.

All sounds in this piece were generated with real-time synthesis by the DMX-1000 Digital Signal Processor, up to a maximum density of 2375 grains/second. However, in many cases, lesser densities were also used since often the progression from isolated sounds or a rapid sequence of events to a fused texture is the most interesting feature of the synthesis method. All layers were multi-tracked with four simultaneous stereo versions and later up to 32 such tracks were mixed. Considerable use was made of ramps applied to the synthesis variables; that is, certain parameters were made to change over time at a specific rate, sometimes with several parameters simultaneously ramped at different rates. Therefore, all sound in the piece is in a constant state of flux, much like environmental sound generally and water sound in particular.

The fundamental paradox of granular synthesis - that the enormously rich and powerful textures it produces result from its being based on the most 'trivial' grains of sound - suggested a metaphoric relation to the river whose power is based on the accumulation of countless 'powerless' droplets of water. The opening section of the work portrays that accumulation, as individual 'droplets' of sound gradually multiply into a powerful broad-band texture. The piece, I find, also captures some of the awe one feels in the presence of the overpowering force of such a body of water, whether in a perturbed or calm state, and as such it seems to create a different mode of listening than does conventional instrumental or electroacoustic music.

Riverrun was commissioned by the Music Section of the Biennale di Venezia with the financial assistance of the Canada Council. It was awarded the Magisterium at the International Competition of Electroacoustic Music in Bourges, France, in 1991.

Barry Truax is a Professor in both the School of Communication and the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University where he teaches courses in acoustic communication and electroacoustic music.

He has worked with the World Soundscape Project, editing its Handbook for Acoustic Ecology, and has published a book Acoustic Communication dealing with all aspects of sound and technology. As a composer, Truax is best known for his work with the PODX computer music system which he has used for tape solo works and those which combine tape with live performers or computer graphics.

In 1991 his work, *Riverrun*, was awarded the Magisterium at the International Competition of Electroacoustic Music in Bourges, France, a category open only to electroacoustic composers of 20 or more years experience. He is also the recipient of one of the 1999 Awards for Teaching Excellence at Simon Fraser University.

Roderik de Man, *Spazio Piccolo* (violin solo)

The Festival Spaziomusica XXIII, Cagliari 2003 commissioned a number of composers to write short solo violin pieces for one of their projects. I wrote "Spazio piccolo, per violino solo" with the intention of "telling it all" in a very small time span, giving the soloist ample possibility to express him/herself musically.

Roderik de Man

Roderik de Man (Bandung/Indonesia 1941) studied percussion with Frans van der Kraan and theory of music at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. At the same time he participated in composition classes with Kees van Baaren and worked in the electronic studio as a student of Dick Raaymakers. From 1972 on he taught theoretical subjects and composition to young composers at the same institute. Since 1998 he is on the board of CEM (centre for Electronic Music). Recently he was asked to be counsellor to the board of the Stichting Ton Bruynèl, foundation for the promotion of electronic music and from 2003 till 2008 he was on the board of the GAUDEAMUS Foundation. Roderik de Man received many commissions from a.o. the Foundation for the Creation of Music, the Amsterdam Art Fund and the Johan Wagenaar Foundation. He composes purely instrumental as well as instrumental/electronic music. His oeuvre consists of solo pieces, chamber music, works with live electronics and video, and works for choir, large ensembles and orchestra.

Several times compositions were selected by the international jury of the ISCM (the International Society for contemporary Music) to be performed during the World Music Days (Oslo 1991, Mexico 1993, Seoul 1997, Boucares 1998, Switzerland 2004 and Hong Kong 2007). In 1991 "Chordis Canam" for harpsichord and tape won the 2nd prize in the competition of the Festival de Musique Electroacoustique in Bourges, where he was among the finalists in 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000 and 2001. In 1999 "Air to Air" for flute, basset horn and trumpet received the 2nd prize in the same festival and also the 2nd prize in the Concorso Internazionale di Composizione "Città die Torino 2000". "Music, when soft voices die...", in 2002 composed at the request of and in the Institut International de Musique Electroacoustique de Bourges, was awarded the first prize in the competition Musica Nova in Prague. In 2005 "Cordes Invisibles" for violoncello, piano and tape(cd) won the first prize in the Concours International de Musique Electroacoustique de Bourges. Roderik de Man's music was performed and broadcast in all European countries as well as in Russia, the United States, Brasil, Mexico, Indonesia, China and Japan.

Karen Tanaka, *Wave Mechanics II* (violin and 'tape')

Between the spring and summer 94, I had written a piece for 20 instrumentalists entitled 'Wave Mechanics' for the Ensemble Kanazawa. In this piece, each instrument was used in a soloistic manner, with special importance given to the first violin part. This part has been extended into this new solo violin piece 'Wave Mechanics II'.

'Wave Mechanics' is originally a technical term of physics. The waves, in this case, are not conceived as having any real physical existence, the term "waves" being used only by analogy as a description of the mathematical relations employed, and the wave would have to be imagined in a hyperspace of many dimensions. This piece interprets concepts of wave mechanics in a metaphorical way, rather than deploying them as a system of immutable mathematical rules.

The pitches E, B-flat and D which appear at the beginning are used as axis throughout the piece, and harmonics and noise generated by those three notes serve as a foundation of the structure.

Karen Tanaka

Karen Tanaka (b. Tokyo, 1961) is acclaimed as one of the leading living composers from Japan. She has been invited as a composer in residence at many important festivals, and her music has been widely performed throughout the world by the major orchestras, ensembles,

international festivals and on radio. She has composed extensively for both instrumental and electronics media. "Her music is delicate and emotive, beautifully crafted, showing a refined ear for both detail and large organic shapes...", *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

Karen Tanaka's musical education began with piano lessons when she was four years old and formal composition lessons from the age of ten. After studying French literature at Aoyama Gakuin University, she studied composition with Akira Miyoshi at Toho Gakuen School of Music. During four years of study there, she won several major awards in Japan and Europe for her composition, including prizes at the Viotti and Trieste competitions and the Japan Symphony Foundation Award.

In 1986 with the aid of a French Government Scholarship she moved to Paris to study composition with Tristan Murail and work at IRCAM as an intern. In 1987 she was awarded the Gaudeamus Prize at the International Music Week in Amsterdam for her piano concerto *Anamorphose*. She studied with Luciano Berio in Florence in 1990-91 with funds from the Nadia Boulanger Foundation and a Japanese Government Scholarship, at the end of which time she wrote *Hommage en cristal*, a commission from the Ultima Festival in Oslo for the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra.

A series of important commissions from Japan, including the orchestral piece *Initium* (1993), *Wave Mechanics* (1994) and *Echo Canyon* (1995), confirmed her as one of the leading living composers from that country. During the same period, there were increasing performances and broadcasts around the world including the UK, USA, France, Scandinavia and five ISCM festivals. She is co-artistic director of the Yatsugatake Kogen Music Festival, previously directed by Toru Takemitsu.

Her recent works, such as *The Song of Songs*, *Night Bird* and *Metal Strings*, develop new directions in her musical language using the latest technology and reflecting different aspects of contemporary culture. In recent years, Karen Tanaka's love of nature and concern for the environment has influenced many of her works, including *Frozen Horizon*, *Water and Stone* and the tape piece *Questions of Nature*.

Since 2000 she has had significant premieres: an ensemble piece *Water and Stone*, commissioned by Radio France in Paris; a second string quartet *At the Grave of Beethoven*, commissioned by the Arts Council of England for the Brodsky Quartet (released on CD by Vanguard label); two solo piano works: *Techno Etudes*, written for Tomoko Mukaiyama (released on CD by BVHAAST label), and *Crystalline III*, commissioned by the Canada Council; and five orchestral works; *Guardian Angel* for the Brooklyn Philharmonic, *Departure* for the BBC Symphony Orchestra, *Lost Sanctuary* for the NHK Symphony Orchestra, *Rose Absolute* commissioned by the Michael Vyner Trust for the NHK Symphony Orchestra conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen, and *Urban Prayer* for Joan Jeanrenaud (cello) and the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra conducted by Kent Nagano. The performance of *Guardian Angel* by the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl in July 2002 brought her music to the attention of the large audience in Los Angeles.

MARJA GAYNOR completed an MA in Cork School of Music in 2004 and has since pursued her interests in early music, Baroque violin and viola studies in the Royal Conservatoire of Den Haag, Netherlands. Since returning to Ireland, Marja has been busy as a baroque musician, session musician, multi-instrumentalist, arranger and composer. She is a member of the Irish Baroque Orchestra, and plays with Camerata Kilkenny, Crow Street Consort, *Musica Poetica* (Netherlands), *The Wallfish Band* (UK) and *Helsinki Baroque Orchestra* (Finland). In Cork she is a founding member of *Beyond the Pale* - a group which specialises in Irish 17th and 18th century music on period instruments - and of Scandinavian roots / East European gypsy band *The Polskadots*. Marja has played and recorded with numerous bands! and singer/songwriters in Ireland, including: *Interference*, *Alphastates*, *The Frames*, *Halfset*, *Paul Tiernan* and *Maria Doyle Kennedy*. Marja has arranged and played string parts on *Adrian Crowley's* critically acclaimed album "*Long Distance Swimmer*" and *Glen Hansard's* Oscar-winning "*The Swell Season*".

MARJA GAYNOR hails from Finland, but has been a resident of Cork since 2002. She completed a MA in Cork School of Music in 2004, and afterwards pursued her interests in early music, Baroque violin and viola studies in the Royal Conservatoire of Den Haag, Netherlands. There, she participated in many contemporary music projects and concerts. Since returning to Ireland, Marja has been busy as a baroque musician, session musician, multi-instrumentalist, arranger and composer. She is a member of the Irish Baroque Orchestra, and plays with Camerata Kilkenny, Crow Street Consort, Musica Poetica (NL), The Wallfisch Band (UK) and Helsinki Baroque Orchestra (FIN). In Cork she is a founding member of Beyond the Pale - a group which specialises in Irish 17th and 18th century music on period instruments - and of Scandinavian roots / East European gypsy band The Polskadots. Marja has played and recorded with numerous bands and singer/songwriters in Ireland, including: Interference, Alphastates, The Frames, Halfset, Paul Tiernan and Maria Doyle Kennedy. Marja has arranged and played string parts on Adrian Crowley's critically acclaimed album "Long Distance Swimmer" and Glen Hansard's Oscar-winning "The Swell Season".

Credits

Computer/sound	Fergal Dowling
Sound Assistant/Lighting	Alexis Nealon

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