

The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

presents

Sounds Modern

performing

Hearing where the end starts

Saturday, December 3, 2016, 2:00 pm

Modern Art Museum auditorium

Program

Tlön (1995)

Mark Applebaum (b.1967)

Flute Soldier (2006)

Zack Browning (b.1953)

Any Resemblance is Purely Coincidental (1978)

Charles Dodge (b.1942)

Once-a-thon II (1998/2001)

Eric Lyon (b.1962)

-- intermission --

Cobra (1984)

John Zorn (b.1953)

Sarah Ruth Alexander, voice

Toshiro Chun, trumpet and conductor

Kyle Downs, electric guitar

Joseph Klein, prompter and conductor

Steven Heffner, double bass

Stephen Lucas, synthesizer

Andrew May (Assistant Director, Sounds Modern), violin and conductor

Elizabeth McNutt (Director, Sounds Modern), flute

Paul Slavens, piano

John Sturino, drumset

Tyler Waters, percussion

Shannon Wettstein, piano

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Tina Gorski, John Nuckels and Jeremy Spracklen of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth for their collaboration and inspiration in bringing our sounds to the Modern. We also thank the University of North Texas College of Music and Saint Cloud State University for their support.

www.soundsmodern.org

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Notes

KAWS is well known for his appropriation of tropes from animations and pop culture, and his irreverent sense of humor. For this concert, we chose pieces exploring similar terrain: music that uses juxtaposition rather than development and transition, works influenced by popular culture and cartoons, and composers who recognize the artistic potential of things we see and hear every day but usually take for granted.

Mark Applebaum writes that "Tlön was composed on the basis of the observation that the act of conducting, in itself, is not only musical, but music. Furthermore, elements traditionally associated only with sound, such as loudness or dissonance (particularly temporal dissonance), may be equally cultivated in the corporeal, gestural sphere; one need only consider the emotional or affective loudness of two people engaging in a virulent argument in sign language." By stripping away the normal function of the conductor, the piece also puts the conductor's actions in a novel and potentially comical context.

According to Zack Browning "Flute Soldier continues a series of works written over the last several years that explore the application of magic squares to musical structure. The 4x4 'Durer Square', which appears in Albrecht Durer's 1514 engraving 'Melancholia', provides the framework for a highly energized musical interpretation of the square." The *Dies Irae* can be heard in the midst of a fractured rhythmic groove.

Eric Lyon writes that his piece "was inspired by Robert Constable Jr.'s signature work, *Once-a-thon*." Does the title refer to the legendary 1960's Once Festival in Ann Arbor? Or to the paradox of live interpretation of music together with an unchanging recorded accompaniment? Lyon answers, quoting Constable, that it is "named after the nation-wide yearly sale of Toyota brand automobiles." For his work, Lyon used found materials (a marital self-help cassette and an interview with a Japanese student) as well as materials generated by his own BashFest software.

We could not resist the parallel between KAWS' *Companion* and the tearful clown Canio from Leoncavallo's opera *Pagliacci*. Charles Dodge used Enrico Caruso's recording of the aria "Vesti la giubba" to create *Any Resemblance is Purely Coincidental*; through manipulation of the recording and a shifting conversation between live piano, recorded singer, and invisible orchestra, Dodge added several layers of irony beyond that already present in Leoncavallo's music. The words of the aria – sung at the point in the opera when Canio realizes his wife has been unfaithful – are:

Recitar! Mentre preso dal delirio,
non so più quel che dico, e quel che faccio!
Eppur è d'uopo, sforzati!
Bah! Sei tu forse un uom? Tu se' Pagliaccio!

Vesti la giubba e la faccia infarina.
La gente paga, e rider vuole qua.
E se Arlecchin t'invola Colombina,
ridi, Pagliaccio, e ognun applaudirà!
Tramuta in lazzi lo spasmo ed il pianto
in una smorfia il singhiozzo e 'l dolor, Ah!

Ridi, Pagliaccio, sul tuo amore infranto!
Ridi del duol, che t'avvelena il cor!

Act! While in delirium,
I no longer know what I say, or what I do!
And yet it's necessary... make an effort!
Bah! Are you not a man? You are a clown!

Put on your costume and powder your face.
The people pay, and they want to laugh.
And if Harlequin shall steal your Columbina,
laugh, clown, so the crowd will cheer!
Turn your distress and tears into jest,
your pain and sobbing into a funny face – Ah!

Laugh, clown, at your broken love!
Laugh at the grief that poisons your heart!

The compositions of John Zorn embrace a variety of genres including jazz, rock, hardcore punk, classical, klezmer, cartoon, popular, and improvised music. Not a composition in the traditional sense, *Cobra* is a game with elaborate rules developed over the course of years of ensemble improvisations. The ensemble members request ("call") specific game signals, which the prompter may communicate to the entire group using placards with symbols on them. Some of these game signals include "cartoon trades," "duos," and material and group changes. The performers may also seek to break the game rules, even recruiting others to join them in a "guerrilla squad" – but they have to be on the lookout for "spies" trying to stop them.

Sounds Modern

Flutist Elizabeth McNutt conceived the Sounds Modern series as an invitation for modern art lovers to enjoy the best innovative modern music. Sounds Modern explores the sonic dimensions of the ideas represented in the galleries, bringing the artwork to life in the concert hall. In addition to directing Sounds Modern, McNutt is director of the Nova new music ensemble at the University of North Texas, where she teaches in the flute and composition areas. Sounds Modern assistant director Andrew May is on the UNT composition faculty.