

The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

presents

Sounds Modern

Sounds from the Strange Forest (soft control): music to celebrate the art of Takashi Murakami

Saturday, September 8, 2018, 2:00 pm

Modern Art Museum auditorium

Program

Pratyahara Event (1963/73)

That I May Time Transcend, That a Universe My Heart May Unfold (2008/18) *

Spring Breathes VI (2018) *

Toshi Ichiyanagi (b. 1933)

Ken Ueno (b. 1970)

Koji Nakano (b. 1974)

--- intermission ---

Techno Etude #2 (2000)

Inter-posi-play-tion (1971)

Remembering Animal Sendai (2011)

Scion Stems (2011)

* world premieres

Karen Tanaka (b. 1961)

Joji Yuasa (b. 1929)

Ken Ueno

Dai Fujikura (b. 1977)

Performers

Nick Bolchoz and Colton Lytle, percussion

Mia Detwiler and Andrew May, violin

Stephen Lucas, electronic keyboard

Kourtney Newton, cello

Mike Capone, viola

Elaine DiFalco, accordion

Elizabeth McNutt, flute

Éva Polgár, piano

Notes

Japanese and Japanese-American composers today navigate similar tensions to those found in Murakami's artwork: the dangers and delights of the natural and technological worlds, the reconciliation of tradition with the global marketplace, the question of *kawaii*, and the struggle to preserve the unique sensibility of Japanese culture within a modern context.

Toshi Ichiyanagi, *Pratyahara Event*

Pratyahara is the "withdrawal of the senses" in meditation and yoga. Each player reads from a different chart of symbols for interpretation, indicating types of behaviors or interactions between players, with numbers indicating time measured in full abdominal breaths (thus different for each player!). Specific choices of action and sound are left up to the performers.

Ken Ueno, *That I may time transcend, that a universe my heart may unfold*

That I may time transcend, that a universe my heart may unfold, commissioned by the Takefu International Music Festival, was originally written for the duo of Maymi Miyata, *sho* (an ancient Japanese mouth organ) and Teodoro Anzellotti, accordion. In traditional Japanese court music (*gagaku*) the sound of the *sho* floats above the rest of the ensemble, quite distinct in timbre and in tuning. In this performance, a new version arranged by the composer for Sounds Modern for this event, gives the role of the *sho* to an amplified string quartet, while the accordion acts as part of a composite instrument together with an electronic keyboard. Ken Ueno comments, "the *sho* both transcends time, while it is also a reminder of the human incapacity to escape time. As I contemplated the *sho* and these aspects of time and the body, I happened to see a Murakami retrospective at the Brooklyn Museum and was taken by the title of a golden lithograph of the monk Daruma (Bodhidharma), whose title I borrowed for this piece, as it seemed apropos. The accordion expands the *sho*, both in register and volume, as well as serve as a modern, Western, counterpoint to the *sho*. This too, relating a fundamentally Japanese aspect of tension/fusion with a Western frame, is where Murakami operates. My work is not an homage to Murakami, but perhaps an acknowledgement that we, in our disparate mediums, are operating in the same cultural zeitgeist."

Koji Nakano, *Spring Breathes VI*

Spring Breathes VI was originally written for daegeum (a Korean large bamboo transverse flute) and marimba and premiered in 2017 by Hyelim Kim and Claire Edwards at the Creativity Unlimited Music Festival in Australia. In 2018, I created a new version for flute and piano, dedicated to the Calliope Duo, which will be premiered in this concert. [The *Spring Breathes* series] came from the landscape of Woodside, CA where I was in residence at Djerassi Artists Program in 2015. I was surprised to see a very dry landscape, where everything seemed to be brown. One day I found a small white flower blooming on the ground. The amazing contrast between a huge landscape (some hills with not much green) and this beautiful flower inspired my *Spring Breathes* series. So, the piece expresses my journey of finding this little flower on the ground, and portrays a change of seasons from winter to spring. (Nakano)

Joji Yuasa, *Inter-posi-play-tion*

Like the *Pratyahara Event*, *Inter-posi-play-tion* leaves sonic decisions to the performer; the music is written as symbols describing behaviors, combined with fractions indicating numbers of long and short events in a phrase. As in Ichianagi's score, Yuasa's notation (oddly reminiscent of math homework) is visually simple but can give rise to complicated results.

Karen Tanaka, *Techno Etude #2*

In January 1999, I was asked by Tomoko Mukaiyama to write a new piano piece for her. Originally she requested that the piece should synchronize with techno music chosen by her which would be pre-recorded on a tape. As we discussed the piece over the following months, we realized that a solo piano work without a tape part would be more substantial. However, the idea of techno remained constantly between us. Finally I wrote a set of three pieces, entitled *Techno Etudes*. The idea of the whole piece can be summarized with the three key words; techno, rhythm and speed. (Tanaka)

Ken Ueno, *Remembering Animal Sendai*

Remembering Animal Sendai was composed at the request of Reiko Manabe for the Hibari Project. It gave me pause to contemplate the mythic scale of devastation of Sendai in the spring of 2011, where my family and I lived for three years during my childhood. The title and piece revisits an earlier piece of mine, *Animal Sendai*, whose title is borrowed from a section in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. In this way, both creatively and personally, I tried to make sense of the present and move forward into the future by coalescing pieces of the past. However distant the future may seem, once lived, every moment of the present contains within it a memory of the past. (Ueno)

Dai Fujikura, *Scion Stems*

Scion Stems was commissioned by Punkt Festival 2011, which was curated by David Sylvian, to whom the work is dedicated. In this piece I wanted to start with one texture and transform the music into all sort of different textures. It is as if you are working on one sample of a recording and first you process it electronically to make a completely different sound, then you split the spectrum of sound into even more different textures. Rather than just lining up the contrasting textures one after the other, I wanted to expose the more organic process of transformation, which happens when you play around with knobs and lever (values) in effectors in computer music. (Fujikura)

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. McNutt also directs 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.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Mark Vaughn for audio engineering assistance; to the University of North Texas College of Music for contributing to this event; and to Tina Gorski and John Nuckels for their ongoing collaboration in bringing our sounds to the Modern. Our next event at the Modern will be at 2 pm on January 19: *American Dreams*, music to celebrate the art of Laurie Simmons. Keep up with the latest Sounds Modern news at www.soundsmodern.org and www.facebook.com/SoundsModern