

The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

presents

Sounds Modern

performing

Women Musicking Women

Saturday, September 3, 2022, 2:00 pm
Modern Art Museum auditorium

Program

Stripsody (1966)

Cathy Berberian (1925-83)

Dust (2015)

Angélica Negrón (b. 1981)

Seething (2019)

Shelley Washington (b. 1991)

Arcana (2004)

Elizabeth Brown (b. 1953)

— intermission —

Maps (of Friendship) (2019)

Sky Macklay (b. 1988)

Mirrors (1997)

Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952)

Only the Words Themselves Mean What They Say (2010-11)

Kate Soper (b. 1981)

- i. Go Away
- ii. Head, Heart
- iii. Getting to Know Your Body

Musicians

Sarah Ruth Alexander, voice (Berberian)

Brittney Balkcom, bass flute and flute (Soper)

Kathleen Crabtree, viola

Mia Detwiler, violin

Morgan Horning, voice (Soper)

Andrew May, technology (Sounds Modern assistant director)

Elizabeth McNutt, flute (Sounds Modern director)

Kourtney Newton, cello and kick drum

Alex Ravitz, clarinet

Notes

Sounds Modern celebrates the Modern's *Women Painting Women* exhibition with a program of works in which women composers explore deeply personal connections. Works by Kate Soper, Cathy Berberian, Shelley Washington, Elizabeth Brown, Angélica Negrón, Sky Macklay, and Kaija Saariaho.

Stripsody was avant-garde singer **Cathy Berberian's** first composition, though she had already collaborated actively in the creation of many works listed under other composers' names. The written score, designed in collaboration with Italian cartoonist Roberto Zamarin, demands sudden shifts performed, in the composer's words, "as if by a radio sound man, without any props, who must provide all the sounds effects with his voice," quotations and onomatopoeic sounds from comic strips, and graphic notations that invite the performer to an unique world of humor and theatricality.

Puerto Rican-born composer and multi-instrumentalist **Angélica Negrón** writes that "**Dust** is inspired by the piece *Devastation No More* composed by my 11-year-old composition student Mondriana Villegas. This is the moment right after the disaster. There's a deep sense of sorrow and desolation but also an inexplicable tranquility and a slight sense of hope. It's clearly the end of something but also the possibility of starting something new."

Seething was written for cellist Amanda Gookin. Composer and saxophonist **Shelley Washington** provides this text as program note to **Seething**:

The Heat Wave
starting in your chest and rolling up
stopping at the base of your neck and
overflowing in your throat
then creeping upwards to your cheeks.
The fine peach fuzz prickling on your heated skin standing alert
A call to attention, present and ready for battle.
The red you see behind your eyes
rushes past your ears
with war drums pulsing
The ever-present thump thump thump
of a beating heart amplified
so deafening you know They must hear it-
-everyone must hear it, for They summoned them.
Your inner Bloodhounds chomp at the bit
awaiting a release they so rarely see
to run rampant, unbridled, muzzle left at the door,
clenched jaws frothing
and their snarls so long trapped behind fangs
freed to howl your long protected rage
-their ward-
kept and sealed and protected
in their darkest inner corners.
but red begins to fade and the Heat cools
as you remember The Routine
You remember you can't completely let them run
and you shouldn't let that blinding heat out
in case it is taken from you
So you let it dissipate into the air
A wafting heat mirage that is only visible to The Others
who also have been forced to keep their inner hounds
kenneled in the yard and on a very very short leash.

Composer **Elizabeth Brown** is also a virtuoso performer on flute, shakuhachi, and theremin, all of which can be heard either explicitly or implicitly in **Arcana**. The composer writes that “the ghostly voice of the theremin shadows the melancholy and lyrical solo flute through a dark soundscape.” The work was commissioned by Toby Perlman and violinist Itzhak Perlman as a 21st birthday present for their daughter, flutist Ariella Perlman. The composer performed the recorded tracks.

Composer, oboist, and installation artist **Sky Macklay** writes that she was “inspired by the beautiful friendship and busy lives of the two members of andPlay, Maya Bennardo and Hannah Levinson” as she wrote **Maps (of Friendship)**. The music sonifies, as the video visualizes, the two musicians’ “mostly-real travel times on different modes of transportation in New York City and Sweden,” and the composition “expresses the complex emotions and diverse experiences of time we encounter in transit.”

Renowned Finnish composer **Kaija Saariaho** imagined **Mirrors** as an open-form work in which the performers could, in her words, “build and play [their] own versions ... by combining pre-defined fragments.” She also assembled her own version of the work, which will be heard in this performance. The title conveys the central concept of the piece: elements of pitch, rhythm, gesture and timbre reflected into a variety of symmetrical shapes. **Mirrors** was written for Camilla Hoitenga and Anssi Karttunen; Saariaho and Hoitenga have been close collaborators the past forty years.

The second section of **Kate Soper**’s theatrical work **IPSA DIXIT** for soprano, flute, violin, and percussion, **Only the Words Themselves Mean What They Say** explores the intersections of music, language, and meaning. Soper says the work arose from “a determination to test my limits as a vocalist and performer and an itch to make something out of Lydia Davis’ fabulously quirky, slyly profound texts,” ... working closely with flutist Erin Lesser to discover “new planes of expressivity, intensity, and insanity as the two players struggle, with a single addled brain, to navigate the treacherous labyrinth of simple logic.”

i. Go Away

When he says, “Go away and don’t come back,” you are hurt by the words even though you know he does not mean what the words say, or rather you think he probably means “Go away” because he is so angry at you he does not want you anywhere near him right now, but you are quite sure he does not want you to stay away, he must want you to come back, either soon or later, depending on how quickly he may grow less angry during the time you are away, how he may remember other less angry feelings he often has for you that may soften his anger now. But though he does mean “Go away,” he does not mean it as much as he means the anger that the words have in them, as he also means the anger in the words “don’t come back.” He means all the anger meant by someone who says such words and means what the words say, that you should not come back, ever, or rather he means most of the anger meant by such a person, for if he meant all the anger he would also mean what the words themselves say, that you should not come back, ever. But, being angry, if he were merely to say, “I’m very angry at you,” you would not be as hurt as you are, or you would not be hurt at all, even though the degree of anger, if it could be measured, might be exactly the same. Or perhaps the degree of anger could not be the same. Or perhaps it could be the same but the anger would have to be of a different kind, a kind that could be shared as a problem, whereas this kind can be told only in these words he does not mean. So it is not the anger in these words that hurts you, but the fact that he chooses to say words to you that mean you should never come back, even though he does not mean what the words say, even though only the words themselves mean what they say.

ii. Head, Heart

Heart weeps.

Head tries to help heart.

Head tells heart how it is, again: You will lose the ones you love. They will all go. But even the earth will

go, someday.
Heart feels better, then.
But the words of head do not remain long in the ears of heart.
Heart is so new to this.
I want them back, says heart.
Head is all heart has.
Help, head. Help heart.

iii. Getting to Know Your Body

If your eyeballs move, this means that you're thinking, or about to start thinking.

If you don't want to be thinking at this particular moment, try to keep your eyeballs still.

Sounds Modern

The most up-to-the-minute and least predictable concert music series in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, Sounds Modern has been exploring links between contemporary music and visual arts for over a decade. Conceived and directed by virtuoso flutist Elizabeth McNutt in collaboration with The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Sounds Modern adds a sonic dimension to the ideas represented in the galleries, and brings 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

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