

Greater Denton Arts Council presents

Music from Parallel Worlds

a Sounds Modern pop-up event

**Thursday, May 23, 2024, 6:30 pm
Patterson-Appleton Arts Center, Denton, Texas**

Program

Dviraag (2009) by Asha Srinivasan (b. 1980)

Biyán (2011) by Raven Chacon (b. 1977)

Joy Boy (1974) by Julius Eastman (1940-1990)

Horse Notations (2019) by Raven Chacon
(in five movements)

Musicians

Sarah Ruth Alexander, voice

Mia Detwiler, violin

Daphne Gerling, viola

Stephen Lucas, keyboard

Andrew May, violin (Sounds Modern assistant director)

Elizabeth McNutt, flute (Sounds Modern director)

Kourtney Newton, cello

Patrick Overturf, percussion

Alex Ravitz, clarinet

Notes

The works in this program reimagine and reinvent the sounds, styles, and relationships of classical chamber ensembles. Composers Raven Chacon, Julius Eastman, and Asha Srinivasan looked to their own experiences and heritages instead of the European tradition, inviting performers and listeners into parallel worlds of musical imagination.

Composer, pianist, and vocalist Julius Eastman devised a unique notational practice that actively engages performers as collaborators in creating gradually evolving minimalist forms. Small cells of musical material in the written score weave together into a subtly shifting tapestry of sound. The ensemble shifts between tightly coordinated events and disintegration into freer, more individualized playing. Eastman's often-shocking titles, of which *Joy Boy* is one of the least controversial, confront difference and demand engagement with Eastman's own reality as a gay Black artist.

Commissioned by Ensemble Music New Mexico / Chatter, *Biyán* uses relatively traditional notation and a variety of repeated patterns to project a sound world far removed from traditional chamber music. Chacon has written that “Chamber music might be considered elitist, or inaccessible to the general public. Finding ways that others can appreciate chamber music has been a goal of mine, either through my own work or my teaching work.” Here, extended techniques and percussion sounds bring the chamber ensemble into an eerily unfamiliar space that upends the norms of the European tradition.

Dviraag is a fabricated word taken from the Sanskrit prefix "dvi" meaning "two" and the word "raag" loosely meaning "melodic mode." The pitch material for this piece is entirely based on a combination of two complementary pentatonic modes. The primary rhythmic material, introduced towards the beginning by the cello, was derived from a Carnatic vocal exercise I fondly remember learning as a child, in India. Of all the beginner's exercises I learned, this one always stood out as being surprisingly challenging and unusual in its subdivisions. This exercise has become the basis for an exploration of intricate rhythmic subdivisions grouped into salient short phrases that recur throughout the piece in various contexts. *Dviraag* was commissioned by the Flute/Cello Commissioning Circle, which is a consortium of four duos: Terra Voce (VA), Exorior Duo (Canada), Brownard Duo (MN), and Keowee Chamber Music (NC). – Asha Srinivasan

Commissioned by the Oregon East Symphony, *Horse Notations* takes its inspiration (and many of the notations in the score) from Étienne-Jules Marey's analyses and graphical analyses of the paces and patterns of horses' hooves. The composer includes with the score a 1874 article from *Popular Science Monthly* discussing this research into gait and rhythm, and presenting several of Marey's illustration. The five movements of the piece can be heard as imaginary tableaux: individual horses and bands of horses heard at varying distances as they walk, trot, canter, gallop, whinny, and listen attentively to the whistling of the wind, rustling vegetation, and other sounds of their environment.

Sounds Modern

Directed by Elizabeth McNutt and Andrew May, Sounds Modern is the most up-to-the-minute and least predictable concert music series in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Sounds Modern has bridged the various experimental music and visual arts communities in our region since 2007. Our next event is on Saturday, June 29 at 2:00 pm in the auditorium of the Fort Worth Modern Art Museum, 3200 Darnell Street, Fort Worth, TX 76107; admission will be free and open to the public.

Find out more about Sounds Modern and our concerts, and sign up for event announcements at www.soundsmodern.org, www.facebook.com/SoundsModern, Instagram @soundsmodern.

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