



Friday, November 21, 2014 - 8:00 pm
Cal Poly Pomona
Music Recital Hall, Music Building

Program

- Sleep Another Night** Garry Eister
- Four Pieces for Sixteen Strings** Jonathan Grasse
- Zero's Vinyl** Buzz Gravelle

ensembleFRET

Cello Suite No. 2 in D minor J. S. Bach
 prelude – allemande – courante – sarabande – menuet I and II – gigue

Peter Yates, guitar

Five Buzz Gravelle
Buzz Gravelle, fretless guitar

Three In A Row Walter Marsh
ensembleFRET

The Egg And The Seed Peter Yates
ensembleFRET with **Alexandra Grabarchuk**

Notes

Sleep Another Night (2014), Garry Eister

"Sleep Another Night" began as a lullaby, although it lost some of that quality, particularly in the middle sections, as I worked on it. Still, near the very end of the piece, just before the music drifts off into Slumberland, one could hear the melodic shape and rhythm of the famous musical setting whose words are "Down will come baby, cradle and all," and, even more deeply hidden right before that, the melodic shape of "Rockabye, baby" in the arpeggione. I love writing for unusual instruments, and it was fun to do something for the arpeggione. On discussing the instrument with me, Peter Yates remarked that a friend of his said that if one doesn't write some arpeggios for the arpeggione, what's the point of using it? I took the excellent advice implicit in this rhetorical question and wrote a brief arpeggiating solo for the arpeggione followed by a series of arpeggiated chords that accompany a series of rising arpeggiated guitar chords which would serve as the climax of the piece, if it had one. Instead, it falls asleep. - Garry Eister

(over)

Four Pieces for Sixteen Strings (2014), Jonathan Grasse (premiere performance)

The individual works comprising *Four Pieces for Sixteen Strings* explore episodic song forms, developmental variations, and ostinati-based studies. The outer pieces are expansive, hybrid contrasts to the directness of the repetitive patterns found throughout numbers two and three. Overall, melodic interplay is foregrounded from varying textures, shifting metric schemes, and freely adapted tonal procedures. The melodicism of the mandolin and arpeggione propel the guitar's harmonic functions. Freely dissonant, polyphonic passages, unison rhythms, and equitably dispersed polyrhythms periodically contrast the work's tonal, homophonic nature. The instrumentation's total number of courses, sixteen, augments the work's title. Already jokingly ambiguous, the title could read *twenty* strings due to the mandolin's double courses. *Four Pieces* was composed for, and recorded by, ensembleFRET with the assistance of a California State University faculty development grant during the composer's sabbatical in spring and summer, 2014. - Jonathan Grasse

Zero's Vinyl (2014), Buzz Gravelle (premiere performance)

I have always been a big fan of jazz guitarist Charlie Christian (1916-1942). In particular, the guitar solo for the tune *Seven Come Eleven* has moments of what I consider to be pure proto-bebop magic. *Zero's Vinyl* explores and meditates on about eight measures of musical material from that solo, filtering it through a post-minimalist musical vocabulary. *Zero's Vinyl* is, in essence, an eight-minute exploration of eight seconds of music. - Buzz Gravelle

Cello Suite No. 2 in D minor, J. S. Bach

prelude – allemande – courante – sarabande – menuet I and II – gigue
Peter Yates, guitar

In this piece, Bach takes to an intriguing limit the art of implying in a single line not only melody but also accompanimental rhythm, harmony and modulation. Ambiguities and surprises are part of the story, and in certain measures the player or listener doesn't discover until almost the next barline what the implied harmony was meant to be. Other great improvisers such as Django Reinhardt or Charlie Parker share this stealthy and playful approach to tracing the background "changes" of the music. In a solo piece, it allows each element of the harmony, especially when it is a chromatic tone, to project its full import. The composer encodes in the line a timing as telling as that of the great tragic actors or comedians. - Peter Yates

Five, Buzz Gravelle

Buzz Gravelle, fretless guitar

My most recent piece for fretless guitar, *Five*, is strongly influenced by Mediterranean musical traditions, in particular flamenco. It is intended as an exciting showpiece in the vein of much solo flamenco guitar music. However, there is also a polyrhythmic framework to the groove of the piece, with the melody playing three notes in the time space of the two bass notes, and a quasi-repetitive cellular approach to the musical patterns and motifs. - Buzz Gravelle

Three In A Row (2014), Walter Marsh (premiere performance)

The three short works here employ a twelve-tone row that has been a preoccupation for the past year. First is a light piece in 3/8 consisting mostly of four bar cells. The second involves a consideration of "Moon River" and "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" along with their respective film characters. Might these two characters be the same person in two different eras and periods of her life? Here, the happy endings are expunged by the row. For the third, we return to another light work, now in 2/4, where the row and a number of its flipped versions finds itself in the time of Haydn. - Walter Marsh

The Egg And The Seed, Peter Yates (premiere live performance)

with guest vocalist, **Alexandra Grabarchuk**
collage images tech, **Alan Berman**

The Egg and the Seed is about intercourse in all forms and levels of scale – molecular, cellular, interpersonal, cultural and national. 250 collage images present a "comic book" age-of-exploration narrative whose text blocks and word balloons are not read, but sung. Metaphors of seeking, sighting, touching, merging, mixing and emerging multiply, leading to a cyclic conclusion where all ends in another beginning. This is the premiere performance of the live version of the work. Peter Yates. - Peter Yates

www.ensemblefret.com

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