



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

UTNMF:
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO NEW MUSIC FESTIVAL

UTNMF presents Electroacoustic Concert

Norbert Palej, *festival coordinator*

Sunday, January 29, 2023 at 7:30 pm | Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park

PROGRAM

The Garden on the Other Side of the Fence (2021)

Óscar Andrés Chavés Morales

alquimia, magia, sueños (2020)

Matías Sánchez Greco

Pilotis (2023)

Luke Blackmore

Automata / Mechanical Garden (2010)

Kotoka Suzuki

INTERMISSION

This Blank Has Been Deleted (2023)

Steven Webb

e (mi) (2022)

Joseph Sims and Katie Finn

Orbiting Garden (1988)

Christos Hatzis

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates.

For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

UTNMF Electroacoustic Concert Program:

The Garden on the Other Side of the Fence (2021 / 8:28): Óscar Andrés Chavés Morales

The Garden on the Other Side of the Fence is born of a listening score for an electroacoustic mixed work with tape, accordion and guacharaca, and meant to be played live. The graphic possibilities afforded by representing sound parameters as spectral visualization provide the tools to go further with some additional emotional understanding: colours, proportions and thresholds not only quantify but can express as well. This work seeks to articulate a bothersome situation in my life in the rainy Colombian countryside: to live next to a large flower-growing company that exports its harvest for sale to countries in the Northern Hemisphere during the winter.

alquimia, magia, sueños (2020 / 10:05): Matías Sánchez Greco

This work was composed from the study of different objects, their sound projection and the possibilities of transformation. It intends to be an approach and a tribute to Pierre Schaeffer. A poetic search on the dialogues between materials. Thus, one goes from a dream to an ethereal field or to more iterated articulations. The concrete, the acousmatic, the immaterial as a poetic encounter.

Pilotis (2023 / 4:15): Luke Blackmore

Pilotis is a fixed electroacoustic “remix” of an upcoming work for octet and electronics. The work relies on the manipulation of highly detailed recorded material - in this case saxophone extended techniques - which are layered, expanded, and otherwise messed-with in order to produce a range of sonic environments.

The title is an architectural term, used to describe pillars or columns which support a structure above ground level, providing an open space below the structure. The work explores the idea of simultaneous elevation and grounding, and alludes to the contradiction between form and aesthetics which defines much modern architectural writing.

The full work, *Machine Civilisation*, is based on the work of French architect Le Corbusier, whose work and writings have been highly influential, yet highly criticized, for their functionalist doctrine. The work explores the imposition of function on a collective, and how individuality can obstruct or support the goals of an aggregate.

This first section, *Pilotis*, focuses on the concept of divergence, where unisons gradually become forgotten in favour of wildly varied contrapuntal gestures.

Automata | Mechanical Garden (2010 / 8:35): Kotoka Suzuki

Commissioned by the Inventionen Festival, Berlin, Germany
Realized at Electronic Music Studio TU-Berlin

The word 'automata' (plural: 'automa' or 'automatons') is derived from the Greek word 'automatos', meaning »acting of itself«. The notion of autonomous mechanical processes has always interested mankind. In the hellenistic world, complex mechanical devices are known to have existed and used as toys, religious idols or tools to demonstrate basic scientific principles. As more elaborate automata could be built in the 18th C., sound effects also became increasingly more important in order to make the automata seem more realistic. Many of them represented mundane figures, such as musicians playing instruments, magicians, or birds singing. Jacques de Vaucanson (1709 – 1782), who studied music, medicine and physics, created a life-size mechanical duck that not only looked and moved like a duck, but also quacked like a duck, and digested and produced droppings like a duck after being fed. In this work, old and new automata and mechanical toys are left in an imaginary garden where they are brought to life and allowed to operate freely according to their own imagination. This work is dedicated to Folkmar Hein, the long-standing Director of the Electronic Studio of the TU Berlin (1974-2009).

INTERMISSION

This Blank Has Been Deleted (2023 / 11:00): Steven Webb (work-in-progress)

As the second part of two works of mine exploring digital connectivity and musical Artificial Intelligence systems, *This [BLANK] has been deleted* draws from a variety of inspirations including, glitch, horror, and cinematic sound design. Thematically, the piece explores concepts around the ephemeral yet consequential nature of our modern digital lives, and begins by examining the hidden online rage that emerges from the protection of anonymity.

Creation of the piece began by interfacing with an artificial intelligence system named Av3ry, feeding it samples and allowing it to arrange the results in increasingly complex patterns. These patterns ultimately produced what I call, 'Digital Sludge' — low-quality, reverb soaked, distorted samples that came to represent the endless stream of mindless, clickbait content we are bombarded with on a daily basis online.

The latter half of the piece shifts to examining this video content, which is increasingly generated by AI in order to fulfill another AI or algorithm's demands for views and clicks. We are but helpless bystanders in this increasingly automated process, with some of us going to ridiculous lengths to feed the algorithmic machine and remain 'relevant'.

e (mi) (2022 / 7:11): Joseph Sims and Katie Finn

e (mi) is an audiovisual composition created by Joseph Sims (sound) and Katie Finn (animation). The piece explores contemporary and traditional aesthetics for visual music, displaying a wide variety of gestural and textural sound-image relationships. The sonic palette finds unity in a variety of materials (field recording, digital and analogue synthesis, concrete recording, etc.). Similarly, the image uses a range of techniques such as hand-drawn animation, coding and 2.5D animation. The focus was to create even hierarchical status in both the sound and image. This was achieved by each artist influencing both mediums at every stage of the creation. The macro and mezzo structures were determined by a visual score, while gestural energy and textures were realized through the sonic material.

Orbiting Garden (1988 / 15:42): Christos Hatizis

Orbiting Garden was commissioned in 1988 by Toronto's Music Gallery for a concert in memory of American composer Morton Feldman, my last composition teacher, who had passed away a year earlier. It was funded by the Canada Council for the Arts and premiered at the Music Gallery by pianist Anthony de Mare on April 8, 1989. Initially, I felt conflicted about the commission, partly because of my rocky relationship with my mentor in the late 1970s and early 80s (we parted company on non-speaking terms) and partly because, only a few short years after my Ph.D. defense, my musical aesthetic had migrated to the opposite side in the ideological universe from that occupied by his music and ideas. (Feldman is quoted as having said, "you drew a large circle and included me; I drew a smaller circle and excluded you." Soon after graduation, that "you" became I.)

Initially, I thought of Orbiting Garden as an act of defiance against Feldman's coercive pedagogy, but also as a counterproposition for inclusivity to his declared exclusivity. Unbeknownst to me at that time, Orbiting Garden contained the seeds of my subsequent development as a composer, including my single-minded obsession with the microcosm of rhythm and minute relationships which still informs most of my music. It took me then the better part of a year to create these fifteen-minutes of music,

struggling with primitive technology and a perpetual outsider's understanding of classical musical instruments.

The original version of Orbiting Garden ended with the vocal lament by Chari (pronounced "Khari") Polatos a dear friend who was struggling with bouts of heroin addiction through most of his life. (The recording of this improvised lament took place at the CBC Radio studios in the midst of one such bout.) In 1992, after Chari's tragic death in a traffic accident and while I was creating a version of the composition for accordion and audio, I decided to append the vocal ending with the coda of the current version, allowing the pianist to conclude the composition. A few years later, in the rapidly shifting sands of technological change, I lost my original computer files of the audio, including the tempo track with the accompanying click track.

Partly because of this, and partly because of the fiendishly difficult solo piano part which requires MIDI-like rhythmic accuracy, Orbiting Garden dropped out of circulation. In April 2019, the thirtieth anniversary of its premiere, I decided to revisit this composition, significantly revamp the solo piano part and carefully and sparingly retouch the dated audio without disturbing its timestamp, thus restoring the original composition to active life once again. This is my new Orbiting Garden: less of a "garden" since the time the piece was originally composed (due to the rapidly accelerating climate change,) but still a dream for the future.