

The Contemporary Music Venture

The Contemporary Music Venture is a series of concerts run by postgraduate students of Bristol University Music Department. The venture aims to provide students the opportunity to have their music performed to the highest standard by the Department's finest performers at a public concert, as well as offering audiences the occasion to hear some of the best established contemporary repertoire.

The Programme

The Memory Toy, re-re- – Neal Farwell

The Memory Toy is a game of spontaneity versus recall. The piece is in three sections. The first begins with an explosion, and ends rather like the same thing filmed and played in reverse. In between, the players are asked to “improvise energetically” – but not at random: they have to respond constantly to each other, while throwing new things into the mix. Meanwhile, the computer records. In the second section, the musicians are asked to recall fragments of the improvisation and play them back transformed, as if they had become electronic. In the final section, the computer joins in with its own take on the earlier improvisation, faster, then much, much slower, with the players invited back in to reminisce with it. *The Memory Toy* has evolved, incorporating elements from previous performances. In the original first performance, Nature contributed a roll of thunder exactly as the piece ended. So the new version added another kind of memory... of what had happened to the music previously. **NF**

Coalesce – Chris Charles (premiere)

Coalesce is the third piece in a series characterised by the use of quintal harmony and a steady 5/4 pulse. The first piece, *Arboresce* for string orchestra, utilises fugal and other imitative textures in order to present sonic information in a linear and self-referential fashion. The second, *Effloresce* for string orchestra and piano, utilises rondo form to present such information in a non-linear way, with episodes arranged as petals around the ‘hub’ of the refrain. *Coalesce* lies between the two and represents a kind of rounded binary form (like the classical sonata). The ensemble is split into two groups, the first of which, consisting of strings and woodwind, presents the initial material. The strings are locked into a very strict three-part quintal chorale which twists and turns like the branch of a tree. The three upper woodwinds are perched like birds on this branch, each with its own distinct voice and rules governing its motion. The second group consists of brass and percussion (including piano). The brass is imitative, like the horn calls of hunters passing through a forest. At first these two sonic worlds are immiscible, and where they collide there is friction as each group interrupts the flow of the other. For a brief moment, however, they manage to coalesce. **CC**

Nobat – Camellia Razali (premiere); cond. Arthur Keegan-Bole

Nobat, court music to accompany religious as well as royal ceremonies, is represented in my own approach and sound, here with the use of wind instruments. I am exploring the sound world of wind instruments to enable me to manipulate the sounds of *Nobat* into a new medium. **CR**

Ripple – Aaron May (premiere)

My piece takes its name from the ever-expanding waves across water when disturbed by a pebble or stone. Starting in near silence, pitches and then themes gradually emerge from the sound of a brush upon a snare drum. As the piece progresses the themes are stretched and distorted before disintegrating and fading to nothing. **AM**

Trio – Benedict Todd (premiere)

The starting point for this *Trio* originally arrived in the form of a textural idea – this is the material heard at the outset of the piece. It deliberately plays towards certain strengths of each instrument in the ensemble: the agility and brightness of the ‘motum perpetuum’ figure high in the piano’s range, the complimentary colours of the high bassoon and muted trumpet. However, as this material starts to be worked and developed (following the initial calm) the true, rather disparate, nature of the ensemble becomes increasingly apparent. Tension rises as music originally conceived for one instrument finds its way into the parts of the others. When, eventually, the inevitable collapse arrives and a return to earlier material might (structurally) be expected, it becomes apparent that something has been broken by this process: the original idea is changed, broken, almost lost ... or is it? **BT**

Study for Solo Horn and Chamber Ensemble – Arthur Keegan-Bole

My first piece for an ensemble of this type, this is a study in the sense that it explores ensemble textures. The first section develops from a gesture using all of the instruments, a short sequence of three complex chords rising in volume to a climax. This is one of the only genuine tutti moments of the piece. After this, textures are formed from sustained, slow-moving gestures as well as short bursts of sound from small groups of instruments. The deconstruction of the ensemble continues and the music becomes evermore fragmented and chaotic. Then the horn interjects and begins the second section: a long, ethereal, cadenza that is nocturnal in character, with textures growing from piano resonance created by the solo horn. The last section brings the ensemble together again briefly in a repeated staccato chord played across the ensemble, which then breaks down completely almost as soon as it appears, leaving the horn alone to close the piece quietly.

My thanks go to Benedict Todd (horn) whose hard work, advice and patience has been of such help. **AKB**

***The Feathered Snake* – Daniel Linker**

This piece intends to depict a mystical journey, which is led by a magical creature: the Feathered Snake. She makes us confront contrasting parts of our inner selves – from chaos and violence to calmness and spirituality. The key concept is how we evolve from one state to another, and how the Serpent leads us through the right path. The piece is made up of several sections, which succeed organically. The whole idea is to provide a sense of evolution or purification through the journey. Thus, the piece starts very tensely and dramatically and ends deeply calmed and centred. It can be understood as a journey of self-encounter. **DL**

The Players

Bristol University New Music Ensemble (NME) performs new works, modern classics and student commissions to the highest standards, giving two lunchtime concerts a year. NME is a flexible ensemble comprised of students from the University with a talent for and interest in contemporary music repertoire. The group focuses on chamber music including music for voice and electronics. Concerts have included rare performances of recent works by young international composers Luke Bedford, Anna Clyne and Onur Turkman.

Richard Barnard studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Birmingham University. He now works as a professional composer, conductor, educator and curator. He is the co-founder and curator of ‘Elektrostatic’ at Arnolfini and Colston Hall. Recent commissions include a dance score for National Dance Company Wales and a full-length opera for Welsh National Opera. Richard designs and leads education projects with major international musicians including Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Eighth Blackbird and London Sinfonietta.

www.richardbarnard.com
Twitter: @richardmbarnard

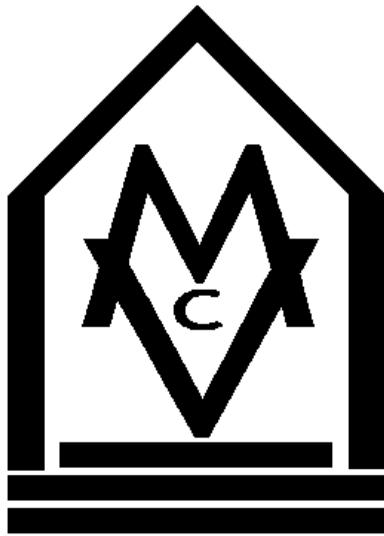
Thanks for coming! Join us at the pub.

**A retiring collection will be made to help cover the costs of the
CMV concert series.**

**Join us at 8pm on Sunday 19th May at Colston Hall 2 for a CMV
concert affiliated with this series.**

**CMV would like to thank Aaron May and Kostis Tsioulakis for
their help and technical wizardry.**

www.cmvconcerts.weebly.com



**Contemporary
Music
Venture**

Concert 3

**Bristol University New Music
Ensemble**

Conducted by Richard Barnard

Wednesday 1 May 2013

8pm Auditorium, Victoria Rooms

Generously supported by The Duignan Fund, Bristol University Music Department,
and ARPA Productions