

The Mills College Music Department and the Center for Contemporary Music present Mills Music Now 2018-2019

MILLS PERFORMING GROUP

Saturday, November 17, 2018

8:00pm

Littlefield Concert Hall

The Mills Performing Group plays music by Meredith Monk, Morton Feldman, Robert Ashley, Maggi Payne, Wendy Reid, and Steed Cowart. Founded in 1963 by composers Darius Milhaud, Luciano Berio, and Morton Subotnick, the group features Mills music faculty, advanced Mills students, and guest professionals presenting a broad range of music repertoire along with new or unusual works.

Admission:

\$15 general, \$10 seniors and students

Buy tickets at the door, or online at:

<https://www.boxofficetickets.com/bot/wa/event?id=330943>

For detailed information, please visit the Music Now webpage:

<http://musicnow.mills.edu>

Wheelchair accessible

Free parking on campus

Mills College
Music Department
5000 MacArthur Blvd
Oakland, CA 94613

Maggi Payne:

Rain

Emily Cardwell: voice/flute, Jiwon Choi: cello, Naomi Clay-Harrison: saxophone, Tony Gennaro: percussion, Eric Glick Rieman: melodica, Lee Hodel: bass, John Ivers: clarinet, Maggi Payne: flute, Matthew Robidoux:

guitar, Mitch Stahlmann: flute, Jess Tambellini: trumpet, Maia Ziaee: piano

Meredith Monk:

Ellis Island

Parlour Games

Belle Bulwinkle and Nalini Ghuman, pianos

Wendy Reid:

Tree Piece #65 "Lulu Variations 3"

Emily Cardwell: voice/flute, Jiwon Choi: cello, Naomi Clay-Harrison: saxophone, Tony Gennaro: percussion, Eric Glick Rieman: melodica, Lee Hodel: bass, John Ivers: clarinet, Wendy Reid: violin, Matthew Robidoux: guitar, Mitch Stahlmann: flute, Jess Tambellini: trumpet, Maia Ziaee: piano

Steed Cowart:

Music for Three Bongos (2017)

I. Brisk

II. Dirge

III. Son Cubano (with a nod to James Tenney)

Imogen Teasley-Vlautin, Antonio Gennaro, Tim Russell: bongos

Morton Feldman:

I Met Heine on the Rue Fürstenberg (1971)

Hrabba Atladottir: violin, Brett Carson: piano, Steed Cowart: conductor, Anne Hege: voice, Sophie Huet: clarinet/bass clarinet, Crystal Pascucci: cello, Laurie Seibold: flute/piccolo, William Winant: percussion

Robert Ashley:

Outcome Inevitable (1991)

Hrabba Atladottir: violin, Brett Carson: piano, Steed Cowart: conductor, Anne Hege: voice, Sophie Huet: clarinet/bass clarinet, Stephanie Neumann: alto saxophone, Crystal Pascucci: cello, Ellen Ruth Rose: viola, Laurie Seibold: flute/piccolo, Andy Strain: trombone, William Winant: percussion, Kristin Zoernig: contrabass

Program Notes:

Maggi Payne

Rain, for video projection (the score) and any number of performers

2/10/17 7:04

Continuing my long fascination with the beauty of water, especially at close range, Rain is a visual score for improvisers. I started shooting the video for this work in 2015, during the worst drought in California in decades, if not centuries. Rainy days were almost non-existent. I shot additional video in 2017, when rainfall was once again abundant, and hopefully not an aberration.

The work consists of seven contrasting sections, all shot from the interior of my small Toyota Corolla, replete with tripod and my contorted body, while I practiced extreme breath control and sitting very still so that the camera wouldn't shake in these extremely close-up shots. The video is silent, relying on the talents of the improvisers to complement the images on the video.

–Maggi Payne

Meredith Monk:

Ellis Island

Parlour Games

I studied piano throughout my childhood with Gershon Konikow and Marcia Polis. I was always drawn to 20th century music, particularly Mompou, Satie and Bartok. In my own piano music, I have tried for directness, asymmetry, and above all transparency which allows for implied space and silence to underlie the composition. The music is seemingly simple but the intricacy of detail and the combination of expressivity and restraint create a challenge for the performer; every gesture is exposed and clear. Since the heart of my work is composing music for the voice, melodic invention, variety of timbre and spontaneity within a rigorous form are aspects that I attempt to bring to my piano music.

I originally conceived of Ellis Island as music for two pianos making one stream or overall texture. The whole piece should shimmer and flow.

Parlour Games is from a multi-movement work Poe Pieces that I composed for Ellen Fisher's dance-theater work Dream Within a Dream, inspired by the life of Edgar Allan Poe. The original form was a four-track recording played by Nurit Tilles. This arrangement for two pianos, an

amalgamation and synthesis of the four tracks, maintains its rhythmic complexity and the sense that four pianos rather than two are playing. Each of the layers should be heard clearly and distinctly.

–Meredith Monk

Wendy Reid

Tree Piece #65 ‘Lulu Variations 3’

for Open Ensemble and African Grey Parrot

Tree Piece#65 ‘Lulu Variations 3’ is an environment in which live performers being bird and humans, interact with digital counterparts, attempting to create a sonically ambiguous landscape. The human performers play from a score of spatially notated timbral motives to be sounded within determined time frames. The bird ‘Lulu’ (both live, recorded) plays a dominant role as solo performer/improvisor, as well as co-composer in her creation of the score. The various musical elements move independently coming together from time to time as a result of the inherent similarities of their timbral natures. The unforced relationship which exists between them is characteristic of the Tree Pieces* as it exemplifies the inter-connection of all things in nature.

This work is part of Reid’s Tree Pieces*, an on-going set of musical processes which attempt to reflect nature’s manner of operations. The processes are contextual in nature thus allowing the performers to act according to the unpredictable conditions and variables which arise from within the musical continuity. In this way, the compositions (as mentioned in Tree Piece #65 ‘lulu variations 3’) attempt to reflect the inter-connection of all things (including ourselves) in nature. In performance, an attempt is made at a spontaneous unforced and unblocked growing of sound and silence in which emphasis is placed on formation rather than pre-established form , as in the building and shaping of cell-like units in living processes.

MANY THANKS TO STEED COWART AND THE MILLS PERFORMING GROUP!

–Wendy Reid

Steed Cowart

Music for Three Bongos (2017)

I. Brisk

II. Dirge

III. Son Cubano (with a nod to James Tenney)

Percussionist William Winant suggested that I compose a piece for three bongos. A composition for three bongos would be useful for both professional and student percussion groups and potentially present lots of opportunities for performance. It seemed like a good idea to me. I also liked the challenge of composing for such a narrowly limited palette of sounds. Music for Three Bongos is the work I composed as a result of Willie's suggestion. It has three movements in a very traditional fast-slow-fast sequence.

When thinking about the piece I might compose, I remembered James Tenney's Three Pieces for Drum Quartet and looked over the score. In the first movement of his piece, Wake for Charles Ives, Tenney took a rhythm that Ives frequently used, and through several repetitions Tenney elaborated Ives' rhythm. The movement is a canon with successive entrances of the parts offset by an eighth note. I stole this idea from Tenney for the third movement, Son Cubano (with a nod to James Tenney), of my composition. In Music for Three Bongos I use a rhythm commonly played by claves in Cuban music and process it in a way very similar to the process Tenney used in his Wake. There is nothing pilfered in the other movements, Brisk and Dirge.

Music for Three Bongos is dedicated to William Winant. It will be published by Material Press in Frankfurt, Germany. <http://materialpress.com/>

Morton Feldman:

I Met Heine on the Rue Fürstenberg (1971)

This serene ensemble piece, of approximately 10 minutes duration, was completed at Pontpoint in May, 1971, on a commission from the avant-garde music group The Fires of London. It is scored for Flute/Piccolo, Clarinet/Bass Clarinet, Percussion (can be played by one performer): Vibraphone, Tenor Drum, Chimes, Temple Block, Glockenspiel, Timpani, Wood Block and Triangle, with Piano, Voice (a mezzo-soprano range of B-flat below middle C to high G), Violin, and Cello. Like many of Feldman's compositions, the dynamic indication for this piece is "Very Quiet" (allowing the rich harmonic and timbral qualities to be heard, which

are lost when music is "projected" at louder volumes) and the tempo is a slowly unfolding quarter note at MM 63. After composing works in the early 1950's that were in graphic notation and left most of the musical parameters (pitch, duration, timbre, event occurrence) to the discretion of the performers, Feldman became dissatisfied with the result because although this manner of composing freed the sounds it also freed the kind of subjective expression of the performers that could not create the kind of pure sound-making that Feldman envisioned. He briefly returned to strictly notated works, found these too confining, and then created works in which most of the parameters were given except for duration and, consequently, coordination among the parts ("The O'Hara Songs" [1962], "For Franz Kline" [1962]). Following this, Feldman began to create works, like "De Kooning" (1963), "False Relationships and the Extended Ending" (1968) and others, which alternate fully determined and indeterminate sections within the same work. "I Met Heine on the Rue Fürstenberg" is a return to the fully notated works, but maintains the mobile quality of unpredictable coincidence between the parts from the earlier works. Each instrument has repeated gestures that may be called "identities" - a normal tone to fluttertongue gesture on the same note in the clarinet and bass clarinet, a quick grace note gesture from left hand to right hand aggregates in the piano part, pizzicato note alternating with bowed harmonic in the cello, amplitude tremolos (like in pre-Renaissance music; S. d'India, for example) to straight non-vibrato tones in the soprano voice, and so on. The music proceeds through rich harmonic fields which are outlined by single notes and simple gestures that cross each other like clouds floating in the sky. Almost every measure has a different time signature - one sequence for example is 3/2, 3/4, 2/2, 10/8, 7/8, 3/4. This is done to notate this music of floating gestures rather than previous music which works off sub-divisions of a background pulse (indicated by one time signature throughout). By the end of the work the vibraphone and the voice play a lovely four-measure melody in unison, the only time a unison passage occurs in the piece. This is followed by a recapitulation of a central harmony and a final 2/2 measure of rest at the end. – Description by "Blue" Gene Tyranny

Robert Ashley
Outcome Inevitable (1991)

The composition was commissioned by the Relâche Ensemble (Philadelphia) in 1991. It is simply a series of solo statements for various

instruments with a percussion and contrabass accompaniment and with each solo instrument "shadowed" by the viola playing softly on the same pitches. The original score was for the instruments in the Relâche Ensemble, but with transposition the piece can be played by almost any group of orchestral instrument. ...

The notes and rhythms of the solo statements were taken from an embarrassingly large table of assignments and proportions I worked on in 1962 under the title of Fives—all of the assignments and proportions deriving from "all possible" combinations of the numbers one-through-five. I have rarely used this table (because it is complicated and hard to use), but when I do I am always somewhat pleased with the results. The proportions of one-through-five seem musical to me. ...

—Robert Ashley