

MUSIC AT AN EXHIBITION

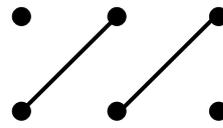
NOTATING

BEAUTY

THAT

MOVES

3.3.2018 SAT 6PM



CONNECTING

THE DOTS

Programme

Erik Griswold	Action Music II (2017) (World Première)
Seth Cluett	interference is partial (2018) (World Première) Commissioned by Hong Kong Sinfonietta
Marcus Whale	Slatted Light (2010) (Asian Première)
Earle Brown	Folio and 4 Systems: December 1952 (1954)
Louis Andriessen	Workers Union (1975)

ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING

Lamorna Nightingale (flute)

Jason Noble (clarinet)

Claire Edwardes (artistic direction/percussion)

and

HONG KONG SINFONIETTA MUSICIANS

James Cuddeford (violin)

Chang Pei-chieh, Laurent Perrin (cello)

Masami Nagai (double bass)

Huang Shan (trumpet)

Christopher Rodgers (trombone)

Chau Chin-tung, Rieko Koyama (percussion)

When a composition is open, graphical, or intentionally ambiguous, when there are only a few seemingly random splashes on the page, how does the musician fill in the blank? This concert explores the musicians' agency not only as performers and executors of instructions, but as co-authors of a musical work. Many of the works included in this presentation share in common an indeterminate instrumentation. Where they differ is the level of information that is made available to the musicians. By comparing these composers' different approaches, we aspire to uncovering the musicians' thought-motion as they "connect the dots."

Programme Notes

Erik Griswold

Action Music II (2017) (World Première)

The composer wrote, "*Action Music 2* is the sequel to my 2013 composition *Action Music*, created for Ensemble Offspring and Clocked Out, and premiered in the working factory of Urban Art Projects. *Action Music* opened up new directions for me. It was my first 'open instrumentation' composition, the first to use extensive graphic notation, and the first to use a 'non-specific pitch' notation.

"In *Action Music 2*, I've explored other possible meanings of 'action music,' such as connections with Jackson Pollock's action painting, and notions of musical and political action, in particular considering influences from African-American music (Charlie Parker) and Fluxus (Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles). I'm really grateful to the APRA AMCOS Art Music Fund for their support of the project, and of course to the musicians of Ensemble Offspring, whose skill, dedication and creativity is inspiring, to say the least."

Seth Cluett

interference is partial (2018) (World Première)

Commissioned by Hong Kong Sinfonietta

The composer wrote, "In the study of memory, interference refers to the way past experiences disrupt and alter the formation of new memories. *interference is partial* uses scoring strategies highlighting real-time shifts in attention, ensemble playing, and the role of short- and long-term visual and echoic memory in listening. A metaphor for the erosion of memory in the wake of technology, the two independent quartets execute material coherent within each group but symbiotically reliant on one another in ways that draw on in-the-moment perception and decision making. The title refers to the partial resistance to interference introduced by long-term auditory memories resulting from exposure to longer duration sounds."

Marcus Whale

Slatted Light (2010) (Asian Première)

The composer wrote, "*Slatted Light* was written in 2011, in third year at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, as part of one of many opportunities afforded emerging composers by Ensemble Offspring. The student-composed portion of the concert accompanied a performance of Stockhausen's zodiac-based work *Tierkreis*, a student composer zodiac of our own given our diverse tendencies. My score, a page of colourful graphic notation, was the most straightforward – I like to think I designed the work so openly because of my deep trust in the interpretive powers of Ensemble Offspring's performers. My mark that semester wasn't great, but somehow, maybe by virtue of its simplicity, the ensemble has kindly given it multiple lives."

Earle Brown

Folio and 4 Systems: December 1952 (1954)

The composition may be performed in any direction from any point in the defined space for any length of time and may be performed from any of the four rotational positions in any sequence. In a performance utilizing only three dimensions as active (vertical, horizontal, and time), the thickness of the event indicate the relative intensity and/or (where applicable instrumentally clusters. Where all four dimensions are active the relative thickness and length of events are functions of their conceptual position on a plane perpendicular to the vertical and horizontal plane of the score. In the latter case all of the characteristics of sound and their relationships to each other are subject to continual transformation and modification. It is primarily intended that performance be made directly from this graphic "implication" (one for each performer) and that no further preliminary defining of the events, other than an agreement as to total performance time, take place. Further defining of the event is not prohibited however, provided that the imposed determinate-system is implicit in the score and in these notes. (Excerpted from the website of Earle Brown Foundation, <http://www.earle-brown.org/>, accessed 28 Feb, 2018.)

Louis Andriessen

Workers Union (1975)

Most of the Dutch composer Louis Andriessen's music aspires to the physical sonic force of rock: he wants a sound more like a Rolling Stones' speaker stack than a classical chamber recital. *Workers Union* is no exception, although it is up to the performers to choose which instruments they will use to get the effect: Andriessen only specifies that the piece is to be played by "any combination of loud-sounding instruments." Many aspects of the work, in fact, are left up to the performers: only general directions in pitch are notated, rather than exact notes, and, in keeping with Andriessen's usual practice, he only gives very general instructions as to playing style "make the piece sound dissonant, chromatic and often aggressive."

Andriessen wants players to cultivate their own, individual styles in his works, rather than take the classical tradition's approach of blending carefully with each other, and this idea of a collective of individuals working to a common goal, but not subsumed by it, resonates with the composer's generally socialist political convictions "only in the case that every player plays with such an intention that his part is an essential one, the work will succeed; just as in the political work." Andriessen further writes that "the title refers to labour movements, where the members have common interests and want to reach their goal in a persistent, hard-headed but difficult matter," and the piece sounds like protest music: loud, rhythmically exciting and often repetitious. The music also sits in the middle of each instrument's register, in the range of pitches beginner players are usually most comfortable in, so the effect is not that of the niceties of musical colour an expert can coax from an instrument, it is rather a kind of vernacular, untrained yelling (Rachel Campbell).