

Music We'd Like to Hear

Friday 16 July 2021

Programme:

Freeman Edwards *2019 Work 46*
Kenneth Maue *Reality (1979)*
Freeman Edwards *2020 Work 15*
Sylvia Lim *Pulsations (2021)*
Freeman Edwards *2021 Work 5*
Julius Eastman *Buddha (1984)*

~ short interval ~

John Lely *Orrery (2021)*

Freeman Edwards *Selected Works*

The advent of recorded media and the internet presents new ways of listening requiring new ways of approaching composition and disseminating works.



I work intuitively, using an electric guitar with additional frets and various tools (thimbles, tungsten rings, etc.) to produce clusters of microtonal pitches suspended in fields of silence. These traits combine to create space for inwardness and contemplation. Indeed, these pieces live by direct transmission, and are imagined for private engagement.

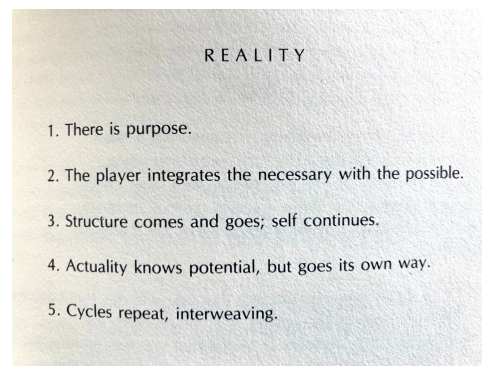
There is no score. The works are made directly into recording as a fully realized form. In pursuing this directness, I want to present the listener both a gesture of sincerity and an intimate space, where the listener meets halfway in realizing a piece. In this sense, my work investigates the capacity to present the listener an internalized sublime, where a certain kind of personal ecstasy or revelation is possible.

FE

Kenneth Maue *Reality (1979)*
John Lely, resonant objects

Reality is one of a set of *Water in the Lake* events notated as the five elements of change: origin, choice, guide, limit, and birth, realized in any setting (violin, chess set, walking, daily life, etc).

KM



Sylvia Lim *Pulsations (2021)* WP
mwltw commission with support from RVW Trust
Mira Benjamin, violin

The violin is prepared with two pieces of cork. As a non-violinist, the creative process involved approaching the instrument with child-like curiosity, intuitively finding sounds I enjoyed through trial and error, and by engaging with the materiality of the cork and the physicality of the instrument. Woven through the work are different forms of pulsation — sometimes rich and ringing, sometimes more subtle and delicate. These form a thread that connects the four sections of the piece together.

SL



Julius Eastman *Buddha (1984)*
James Creed, electric guitar

The score for *Buddha* offers much and specifies little. It is hand-drawn on a single sheet of orchestral staff paper; a collection of pitches contained in an ovoid shape, all bracketed with

lines which emanate outwards. The title is written large in a careful cursive beneath. The given pitches construct a familiar mode with occasional ambiguity, but notes on instrumentation, duration, and sounding intention of the graphic elements are not present.

The piece is one of very few known works composed after Eastman's eviction from his East Village apartment in late 1981 (or perhaps early 1982, sources differ), and there is no current record of a performance in his lifetime. Specific intentions for the elements that are not specified may have been written down but lost, or they may have been intended but unwritten, or they may never have been intended. This ambiguity gives me pause before calling the score explicitly "open" or "indeterminate" as it is sometimes considered (and was, initially, by me), but the encounter at the point of performance is similar. A notation practice blending indeterminacy and shorthand is common through many of Eastman's manuscripts, but in the case of much of his earlier music these ambiguities are informed by histories of performance and account. *Buddha*, then, appears to us as it is written.

Buddha hasn't been performed much since Eastman's death in 1990, and the interpretations that have appeared differ greatly from one another. The realisation performed today likely says more about how I play the guitar than it does about *Buddha*, but I'm sure that's present somewhere in the case of anyone playing anything. I have been experimenting with always-recording loops as an extension of my instrument, using these to carefully build malleable sound structures; this ongoing experimentation seems to fold itself around what I understand of *Buddha*. In my reading of the score, it has shape, but no sense of direction; it has motion, but nowhere in particular it needs to be.

JC

~ short interval ~

John Lely *Orrery* (2021) WP
Kerry Yong, piano

An 'orrery' is a mechanical model of celestial bodies in their various orbits. Although no direct analogue is intended, this piece does have some resemblances to such devices, hence the title.

The piece began to form in Montreal in 2012 and, after going through various iterations, was finally completed in Norwich in March 2021. *Orrery* is dedicated to Kenneth Maue, and lasts around 35 minutes.

JL



photograph by Anton Lukoszevieze

Biographies

Mira Benjamin lives in London, performs with ensembles including Apartment House and Plus Minus, and teaches at Goldsmiths, University of London.

James Creed is a composer and guitarist currently based in London. His scores and music are mostly concerned with ways of playing together and the ways that we ask things of each other, often working with open and experimental notations. The music he performs and writes is generally quiet, slow to change, and built from familiar materials.

Freeman Edwards (b. 1993) is an American composer & guitarist based in Brooklyn, NY. Finding comfort in the studio, he works mainly navigating the terrain between improvised and composed music and between electronic and acoustic sounds. His music is characterized by quiet, sparse pieces in concise forms. These works tend to employ open forms devoid of narrative and structured by their own internal logic, forming a continuous present rather than a linear trajectory. His pitch system combines the twelve tones of equal temperament with an unrestricted microtonality: both for approximating the "purer" intervals of just intonation as well as highly dissonant, pulsating pitch relationships reminiscent of the timbral qualities of bells and other instruments with high degrees of inharmonicity.

Julius Eastman (1940-1990) was a composer, singer, pianist and dancer based for much of his life in New York. He studied piano and composition at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia before moving to Buffalo, NY to join the Creative Associates new music centre at Buffalo. Through the 1970s Eastman was an important figure in the downtown New York City experimental arts scene, working closely with Meredith Monk, Petr Kotik and the S.E.M. Ensemble, Peter Maxwell Davies and many others. He was by all accounts intensely political and proud of his identity; in a 1976 interview he stated: "what I am trying to achieve is to be what I am to the fullest. Black to the fullest, a musician to the fullest, a homosexual to the fullest." A series of struggles and misfortunes left Eastman homeless following his eviction from his East Village apartment in the early 1980s. The years following this are currently unclear, but it is known that Eastman spent some of this time staying with friends across the north-east, sleeping in Tompkins Square Park, giving piano recitals at a men's shelter, and working to secure a teaching position. Interviewed by a Newsday journalist researching a story on a nearby crime in 1989, he said "I'm 48. I'll get it back together." Eastman died in 1990 of cardiac failure in Buffalo, with public notice of his death given in an obituary by Kyle Gann for *The Village Voice* eight months later. Performances of his music have become more and more regular since the early 2000s, thanks in large part to a collaborative archival project instigated by Mary Jane Leach, and his work is increasingly the subject of discussion and scholarship.

John Lely composes and plays with acoustic and electronic objects & instruments. Recent works for Erik Carlson, Michael Duch, Mira Benjamin, Tre Voci Cello Ensemble, and Philip Thomas. Formative and ongoing collaborations with John Tilbury, Apartment House, Bozzini Quartet and edges. Notable recordings: *The Harmonics of Real Strings* with Anton Lukoszevieze, cello (Another Timbre at92), *Seaside* with Dirar Kalash & John Tilbury (at100). Co-author of *Word Events: Perspectives on Verbal Notation* (Bloomsbury 2012), a book about text scores. Co-founder of Music We'd Like to Hear.

Sylvia Lim is a composer based in the UK. Her works are intimate, exploring a small amount of material in depth. She is interested in the materiality of sound, notions of close listening, perception, rawness and instability. Her music is often influenced by natural phenomena and the visual arts. She works very closely with musicians, visual artists and dancers.

Recent commissions include music for the Aurora Orchestra, Ars Nova Ensemble Instrumental + The Riot Ensemble, Music We'd Like to Hear and EXAUDI. Sylvia's music has been performed by Plus-Minus Ensemble, EXAUDI, CoMA Singers, Liam Byrne, Ben Smith, Natasha Zielazinski, Musarc, Fournier Trio, Kaleidoscope Saxophone Quartet, and tick tock. Her music was published in the CoMA Partsong Book, and performed at the London Contemporary Music Festival, CoMA Festival, BEAST FEaST 2021 and Barbican OpenFest's Unfinished. She was on the LPO Young Composers Programme and Psappha's Composing for Piano scheme in 2019/20, and is now on the RPS Composers Programme as a Rosie Johnson RPS / Wigmore Hall Apprentice Composer. Her music has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and KFAL.

Sylvia completed her PhD ('Exploring organic decay through sound') at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where she also gained a first class Bachelor of Music (Honours) and a Master of Music with distinction, winning the Ian Horsbrugh Memorial Prize for Composition in 2015. She now teaches composition there.
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Kenneth Maue - Classical piano and Quaker education hinted that music is the language of intelligence, as mathematics is of matter, thus a study of elemental philosophy, *Water in the Lake: Real Events for the Imagination* (1979), honed in holistic health, handcraft, finance, history, and politics, and a handbook of first principles, *The World Is Music: Restoring Wisdom* (late 2021).

Kerry Yong is a performer, composer and arranger based in east London. He trained as a pianist and now also performs on keyboards and electronics. He performs in groups such as Apartment House, Plus-Minus Ensemble and WeSpoke, and has appeared in many new music festivals including Audiograft, Borealis, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, LCMF, MaerzMusik, ISCM World Music Days, Ultima; in series such as Kammer Klang, Music We'd Like To Hear and NonClassical; on BBC Radio and recording labels Another Timbre and Wirripang.

His solo repertoire includes odd classical repertoire (such as the Alkan's arrangement of Mozart's D minor Concerto K 466 for solo piano), Messiaen's complete Catalogue d'oiseaux, new compositions, and his own project Cover Me Cage: electronic arrangements of various prepared piano works by John Cage.

Kerry studied piano with Stephanie McCallum in Sydney and completed a doctorate at the Royal College of Music in London studying piano with Andrew Ball. He is also Director of Music of Grace Church Hackney, where they are happy to use ancient chants, traditional hymns and new works with choirs, bands, electronics, objects and the like.

curated by John Lely and Tim Parkinson
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