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Leaven Community, Portland

October 23, 2021

Drew Baker, *How You Gaze Beyond the Vast Time*

Lee Elderton (soprano saxophone)

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Jordan Nobles, *Nocturne*

Matt Carlson (piano), Lee Elderton (soprano saxophone),
Collin Oldham (cello)

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Ailie Robertson, *Vedbæk*

Matt Carlson (piano), Lee Elderton (clarinet),
Catherine Lee (oboe d'amore), Collin Oldham (cello)

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Antoine Beuger, *Como un Océano de Olas Innumerables*

Matt Carlson (piano), Lee Elderton (clarinet),
Catherine Lee (English horn), Collin Oldham (cello)

THE MUSIC

Note: Pieces in this program may contain extended silences, during which we ask that audience members also remain silent.

Drew Baker, *How You Gaze Beyond the Vast Time* (2009): Per the composer, “The title *How You Gaze Beyond the Vast Time* is taken from the American artist Cy Twombly’s massive painting *Untitled (Say Goodbye, Catullus, to the Shores of Asia Minor)*. I first used the line ‘How you gaze beyond the vast time’ in a piece I wrote from 2006 entitled *Ellipsis* for nine players. This line is actually a splicing of two separate statements: ‘how you gaze’ and ‘beyond the vast time.’ The first three words are inscribed at the top right of the canvas and the last four appear at the bottom. I have always liked the way in which these combined statements intersperse the visual and temporal, especially via the word ‘gaze.’ The American Heritage Dictionary defines it as ‘a steady, fixed look.’ This came to mind when Bill Conn asked me to write a piece commemorating the life of his grandmother. I imagined the enduring gaze of our departed loved ones, ever-present and seemingly existing ‘beyond the vast time.’ The other image that came to mind was that of the horizon. In Twombly’s painting, crudely rendered boats move toward a large swath of nearly empty canvas, as though disappearing into the open sea. The instructions at the top of the score read, ‘steady, faint yet glowing—like a distant horizon.’ I sought to create a slowly moving sound world in which the saxophone’s gently shifting pitches imply both the horizon we see and the infinite expanses beyond.”

Jordan Nobles, *Nocturne* (2013): A score for a specialized ensemble of any instrumentation, *Nocturne* asks each musician to find their way through the same melodic material but at their own pace, “playing the melody independently and freely, leaving room for the others.” Lonely and full of longing, each player’s melody seems to search for its echo in the others’.

Ailie Robertson, *Vedbæk* (2018): *Vedbæk* is a text score that takes as its central image a Mesolithic grave in the Danish town that shares its name. “I remember reading about it,” the score says. “A tiny article in the newspaper, hidden amongst reports of greed and hate and rage. A Bronze age woman and her baby, found buried together, laid on a swan’s wing. Eerie and tender all at once. Laid in privacy and darkness, the little bodies embracing, not on the ground but cradled in the downy scoop of a swan’s encircling wing. Red ochre on feather-white. Placed in landscape, placed in

time. Put to ground in the howl of the wolf 's moon, in the still silence of long December snow, In the blue-dappled dark." Intended as "a sort of connective tissue that holds you, holds each other, holds the past," the score ends with a question from Mary Oliver's poem *Swan*: "And did you feel it, in your heart, how it pertained to everything? And have you too finally figured out what beauty is for? And have you changed your life?" Performers are instructed to play, sing, or speak their reactions to the text "tenderly, with care and curious noticing."

Antoine Beuger, *Como un Océano de Olas Innumerables* (2018): Based on a Spanish translation of Jalal ad-Din Rumi's *Rubayat* by Clara Janés and Ahmad Taherí, *Como un Océano* is a collection of 48 one-page scores, each based on one stanza of poetry. Performers can play as many or as few pages as they wish. The words provide the melodic material, with notes (a-b-c-d-e-f-g) extracted as individual tones or, if more than one appears in a word, short melodies. Words that contain no note letters are spoken aloud by the players. "Each phrase," the composer writes, should be played as "a single expression / tight or extended / almost sudden / almost unanticipated / always tender / sometimes fierce (if it happens so) / emerging from a vibrant silence / the silence of love / radiating warmth." This evening, the musicians will be performing just a few of the 48 scores.

THE PERFORMERS

Matt Carlson (piano) is a pianist and electronic music composer/performer from Portland, Oregon. He works with analog modular synthesis, voice, computer control, field recordings, and time delay effects to construct dense clouds of surrealistic electroacoustic sound phenomena. He also performs with bass clarinetist Jonathan Sielaff as Thrill Jockey recording artists Golden Retriever. www.thrilljockey.com/thrill/Golden-Retriever

Lee Elderton (soprano saxophone, clarinet) has been a featured soloist in concerti and solo works, and has toured internationally with the Spectrum Quartet. In addition to his pursuits as a classical saxophonist, he is an avid performer of jazz and improvised music and has recorded with the creative music quartet Return to One, Ocular Concern, and Zappa alumnus Mike Keneally. Lee has also performed with the Portland Wind Symphony, Portland Jazz Composer's Ensemble, Machete Order, Ocular Concern, and the PDX Saxophone Quartet, as well as with artists Kim Richmond, Tiger Okoshi, Bud Shank, Ernie Watts, Wayne Horvitz, Roscoe Mitchell, Tim Berne, and William Hooker.

Catherine Lee (oboe d'amore, English horn) has performed extensively as a solo, chamber, and orchestral musician on oboe, oboe d'amore, and English horn, in settings from classical to free improvisation. Her recent CD *Remote Together* and solo recitals at Open Space (Victoria) and the Now Hear This Festival (Edmonton) included newly commissioned solo works that explore experimental compositional and oboe performance techniques. She has performed at Sound Symposium (Newfoundland), Performer's Voice Symposium (Singapore), and Embodiment of Authority (Helsinki) and is a member of the Re:Soundings Trio (with pianist Dana Reason and flautist John Savage) and the Lee + Hannafin Duo (with percussionist Matt Hannafin). Catherine holds a Doctor of Music in Oboe Performance from McGill University (Montréal) and teaches at Willamette, Western, and George Fox Universities. www.catherinemlee.com

Collin Oldham (cello) has interpreted contemporary music with the Verge Ensemble in Washington D.C. and with Ensemble Aleph in Paris. He has appeared as a guest performer with the Corigliano and Carpe Diem string quartets, as soloist with composer Samuel Adler at the American Academy in Berlin, and with violinist Lina Bahn at the Gaudeamus festival in Rotterdam. He has performed with the Louisville Orchestra, the Oregon Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra, and the Washington (DC) Opera. He has performed and/or recorded with local rock stars The Decemberists, Richmond Fontaine, and the Portland Cello Project. He studied cello performance at Northwestern University, University of Louisville, Moscow Conservatory, and the University of Southern California. He also studied computer music at Stanford's Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA). www.collinoldham.com

THE SERIES

Extradition is directed by **Matt Hannafin** and presented by the **Creative Music Guild**. Recording services by **Juniana Lanning**. Door management by **Jessica Simpkins**. Info: www.extradition-series.com

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