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Plays *Corner*

CELEBRATING 90 YEARS IN THE LIFEWORK OF PHILIP CORNER

CONCERT FIVE OF FIVE • FEBRUARY 18, 2023

Leaven Community, PDX

When They Pull the Plug

Loren Chasse, Matt Hannafin (percussion, natural objects)

Electro-Acoustics

Francisco Botello, Matt Carlson, Juniana Lanning (electronics),
Loren Chasse, Matt Hannafin, Tim DuRoche (percussion)

Homage to Revere

Juniana Lanning, Loren Chasse, Tim DuRoche, Matt Hannafin (percussion)

Attempting Whitenesses

Branic Howard, Brandon Conway, Robert Blatt (eBow guitars),
Francisco Botello, Juniana Lanning (electronics),
Matt Hannafin (vibraphone)

The Art of No-Art, Nos. 1, 255, 361 & 370

Matt Carlson (piano)

Through the Mysterious Barricade

Matt Carlson (piano), Juniana Lanning (sampled percussion),
Matt Hannafin (vibraphone), Tim DuRoche (drums),
Loren Chasse (percussion), Evan Cordes (gamelan gongs)

Extradition offers a standing ovation to Philip Corner & Phoebe Neville for their decades of creativity, their absolute dedication to a life of art, and their unflagging help and encouragement as we prepared for these concerts.

THE MUSIC

When They Pull the Plug (2002). Apropos for the era of climate dystopia, this piece “was thought up while thinking of electrical failures” and was first performed by the Laboratorio di Ricerca Musicale of Palermo, Italy, in October 2004. The conception is simple: Players use “mostly unrefinedly natural” materials—perhaps branches with leaves, stones, shells, dried grasses, flowers, as well as rough manufactured objects such as bricks, glassware, ceramics, and rusted metals—to produce sound on multiple instruments. Players move together through a number of movements, each of which pairs specific natural objects with a specific type of instrument.

Electro-Acoustics (2009). Sometimes a score appears that seems to have been made for Extradition, and this is one. Scored for electronically generated sounds (including amplified machinery) and percussion instruments, the piece provides 14 situations for playing, presented as a mix of text and graphics. Performers make their own way through the situations in whatever order they choose, “freely construct[ing] and improvis[ing] from the given musical patterns.”

Homage to Revere (1962). In the late 1950s and early 1960s, copper-bottom Revere Ware cookware was all the rage. Extradition’s artistic director Matt Hannafin’s parents were gifted with a set for their wedding. Around the same time, Philip Corner also got married and also received Revere Ware. Then the inevitable happened. “How not to use,” he later wrote, “for other than cooking, that great wedding gift of copper-bottom pots, casseroles, skillets, and their covers . . . all sounding so good as if made for music.” That musicality was made manifest in “Homage to Revere,” which presents players with 16 instruction cards, most of which individuals can order as they wish. Specific cards begin and end the piece, creating structure.

Attempting Whitenesses (1964). Written for a “small ensemble of same color,” the piece was first performed by a recorder ensemble, and was later presented with trombones. Tonight’s version is plugged in, featuring three electric guitars played with eBows, two electronics, and bowed vibraphone.

The score itself is confusing, but a recent interview revealed the piece's inherent simplicity. "That's an easy piece," Corner told us. "The idea is that you have long, beautiful, sustained tones: a steady state, with tones chosen to express lightness, harmony, and all that. That's the norm, and what's on the score is like getting away from the norm—the anomalies. Something happens, some kind of distortion or something, getting it into noise. And that's basically what it is. The score is just a repertoire of my imaginings of how you can mess it up. Really, [the score] is the last thing you should be looking at. If I were writing the piece now, it would be a verbal score that says simply what I just told you."

The Art of No-Art, Nos. 1, 255, 361 & 370 (2019–22). In a 2020 interview with Joshua Minsoo Kim, Corner explained the Art of No-Art series, which represented the majority of his output between 2019 and 2022. "This year I've been doing a series of minimalist piano pieces but they're conceived of as meditations. They're very, very—I mean, for me—abstract. The whole series is on octave multiples, nothing but octave multiples, but there's now [385] of them, and I didn't expect them to go so far. . . . [T]hey're all different and I just kept amazing myself, finding how much there was to do with just that. I've tried to stop several times but I just keep getting these ideas that just seem too good to me. I'm hoping that there will be no more. . . . I go to sleep telling my inner muse, 'Stop it! Why won't you let me sleep? I don't want to write any more of these pieces! Just stop!' [laughter]."

Through the Mysterious Barricade (2003). "There was a time," said Corner in the Joshua Minsoo Kim interview, "that I felt that I had to have some kind of a more disciplined spiritual practice. I had to do something that was in some sense compatible with my world vision, but analogous to getting up at five o'clock in the morning, putting on tefillin and saying *Shema Yisrael*." By the early 2000s, that impulse had begun manifesting in daily piano improvisations that took off from the Western Baroque and Classical repertoire ("that's my culture, that's my tradition, that's my education"), using a single chord or melodic pattern from Corner's favorite pieces and letting them take him to new places. François Couperin's "Les Barricades Mystérieuses" is inarguably the most important source composition of this period, its melodic pattern inspiring multiple variations of Corner's piece "Through the Mysterious Barricade." Corner has written that "Refusal to refute the traditional . . . has been a major sign of everything that I've done," and in this piece that philosophy is perfectly distilled, blending the composer's absolute love and respect for his musical tradition with an eagerness to use that tradition for new ends. "I'd start off with the B-flat,

and by the time I got to the Couperin, God knows what would happen. . . . [F]or five, ten minutes you'd hear it coming. You'd hear it kind of coalescing, you'd get into the pattern, and then, how long would you play along with this B-flat chord? It eventually coalesces . . . [i]t's moving from the minimalist thing, just the B-flat, and then this borrowed Baroque thing that is based on the B-flat, and then it repeats and grows and evolves spontaneously until it finally goes to anywhere!"



LEARN MORE: Our EXTRADITION PLAYS CORNER page includes quotes, biographical information, articles exploring Corner's main themes and compositional approach, and links to additional resources. Scan here or go to: www.extraditionpdx.com/extradition-plays-corner

AND NOW: CORNER RECORDINGS + NEW CONCERTS

EXTRADITION PLAYS CORNER now goes digital, with a compendium of live concert recordings and recordings of additional Corner pieces by Extradition musicians and friends worldwide. Look for it on Bandcamp in late March or early April, just in time for Corner's 90th birthday.

AND FOR THE REST OF 2023 . . .

Spring Concert • April 22 @ Leaven Community, 5431 NE 20th Ave, PDX

Summer Concert • July 22 @ PWNW, 4625 SE 67th Ave, PDX

Fall Concert • October 21 @ Leaven Community, 5431 NE 20th Ave, PDX

Extradition is directed by **Matt Hannafin**. Live sound by **Tim Westcott**. Recording services by **Branic Howard / openfieldrecording.com**. Door management by **Caspar Sonnet**.

See www.extraditionpdx.com for performance calendar, ensemble info, sound archive, and more.

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