

Last Trane to Clover Five: Dal Niente with Ken Vandermark at the Hyde Park Jazz Festival
September 25, 7:15pm
Logan Center for the Arts

Program

***Cult of Electromagnetic Connectivity* (2020)**.....Nicole Mitchell (b. 1967)
for flute, bass clarinet, percussion, violin, cello

***Merce and Baby* (2012)**.....George Lewis (b. 1952)
for flute, percussion, violin, cello

***Bernice / The Birdhouse* (1995) / *Ladies in Love* (2000)**.....Fred Anderson (1929-2010)
Ken Vandermark, saxophone

Last Trane to Clover Five* (2020)*.....Roscoe Mitchell (b. 1940)
for baritone saxophone and ensemble
Ken Vandermark, saxophone

**world premiere

Performers

Ken Vandermark, saxophone
Michael Lewanski, conductor

Constance Volk, flutes
Zach Good, clarinets
Jesse Langen, guitar
Ben Melsky, harp
Mabel Kwan, piano
Kyle Flens, Percussion
Tara Lynn Ramsey, violin
Ammie Brod, viola
Juan Horie, cello

Acknowledgements

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Thank you to the Paul M. Angell Family
Foundation
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Harvard University
Thank you to Greg Nigosian

Program notes

Cult of Electromagnetic Connectivity

In a dimension humans cannot perceive, the outpouring of electromagnetic radiation from digital technology excites invisible creatures into a frenzied dance as they begin to redesign our physical reality. For better or worse?

—Nicole Mitchell

Merce and Baby

Most of the flute, violin, and cello material for Merce and Baby was created with particular reference to Paul Zukofsky's performance of Cheap Imitation as a violin solo. Since Cage called Cheap Imitation a "chromatic modal" piece, I started there, performing the heresy of rounding off the frequencies in a 7-tone Harry Partch scale to equal temperament as material for the three instruments, then crossfading the ET melodic material into the actual microtonal frequencies, making my cheap imitation of Cage's imitation "modal microtonal."

The computer was central to my cheap imitation of Baby Dodds. Since the 1946 performance of Fast Blues featured Dodds as the only musical performer, I used the computer to help transcribe Dodds-created drum solos, taken from a 1951 Folkways recording, into musical notation. Where the transcription seemed poor, I recorded myself scat-singing an imitation of what I was hearing as I listened to a Dodds solo, then had the computer transcribe that recording. Finally, I revised the transcriptions in ways that referenced but did not emulate Cage's process in Cheap Imitation. Rather than relying on externally imposed chance operations, I relied upon embedded sources of indeterminacy. In the computer transcription process itself, subsequent transcriptions of the same solo would differ in small details depending on the settings used. Finally, both Dodds's improvisations and my improvisations on Dodds draw upon that dangerous hybrid of agency and indeterminacy that mark any improvisation, whether in art or in life.

—George Lewis

Last Trane To Clover Five

dedicated to John Coltrane

Roscoe Mitchell, Craig Taborn, Kikanju Baku 2013

Transcription by John McCowen 2019

Orchestrated by Roscoe Mitchell 2019/20

When Ilan Volkov invited me to the Tectonics Festival in Reykjavik, Iceland on April 14 and 15, 2016, to perform at the Harpa Concert Hall, I was inspired to create a series of compositions, drawing on transcriptions of improvisations off the albums Conversations I and Conversations II I recorded for Wide Hive Records in 2013 with Craig Taborn and Kikanju Baku. Using these transcriptions to populate material serving as the basis for orchestral compositions, I have been

able to articulate the relationships between composition and improvisation that support this endeavor.

I chose to reach out to the Mills College community when seeking collaborators to contribute to the initial transcription process. I approached two former students (Christopher Luna-Mega and Daniel Steffey) in addition to a current student of composition (John Ivers), affording them the opportunity to demonstrate the talents they'd cultivated during their studies at Mills. At the recommendation of Washington University's Paul Steinbeck, I also enlisted the services of Stephen P. Harvey of Youngstown State University, Dr. Christopher Stover formerly of the New School College of Performing Arts and now professor of music theory at Arizona State University, Shirantha Beddage, Director of Theory and Harmony at Humber College Music, Toronto, Canada and Marc Hannaford, graduate student in music theory at Columbia University. Each of these immensely talented musical minds submitted precise transcriptions of the improvisations recorded by Taborn, Baku, and myself. Last Trane To Clover Five is part of this series of works I have titled Conversations for Orchestra.

I would like to thank the Fromm Foundation for commissioning this composition.
–Roscoe Mitchell

About the composers

George E. Lewis is the Edwin H. Case Professor of American Music at Columbia University, where he serves as Area Chair in Composition and Faculty in Historical Musicology. A Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy, Lewis's other honors include a MacArthur Fellowship (2002) and a Guggenheim Fellowship (2015), a Doris Duke Artist Award (2019), a United States Artists Walker Fellowship (2011), an Alpert Award in the Arts (1999), and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Lewis studied composition with Muhal Richard Abrams at the AACM School of Music, and trombone with Dean Hey. A member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) since 1971, Lewis's work in electronic and computer music, computer-based multimedia installations, and notated and improvisative forms is documented on more than 150 recordings. His work has been presented by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonia Orchestra, Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart, Mivos Quartet, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, London Sinfonietta, Spektral Quartet, Talea Ensemble, Dinosaur Annex, Ensemble Dal Niente, Ensemble Pamplemousse, Wet Ink, Ensemble Erik Satie, Eco Ensemble, and others, with commissions from American Composers Orchestra, International Contemporary Ensemble, Harvestworks, Ensemble Either/Or, Orkestra Futura, Turning Point Ensemble, Studio Dan, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, 2010 Vancouver Cultural Olympiad, IRCAM, Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra, and others. Lewis's music is published by Edition Peters.

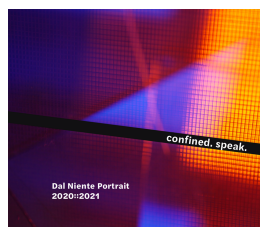
Nicole M. Mitchell is an award-winning creative flutist, composer, bandleader and educator. She is perhaps best known for her work as a flutist, having developed a unique improvisational

language and having been repeatedly awarded “Top Flutist of the Year” by Downbeat Magazine Critics Poll and the Jazz Journalists Association (2010-2017). Mitchell initially emerged from Chicago’s innovative music scene in the late 90s, and her music celebrates contemporary African American culture. She is the founder of Black Earth Ensemble, Black Earth Strings, Sonic Projections and Ice Crystal, and she composes for contemporary ensembles of varied instrumentation and size, while incorporating improvisation and a wide aesthetic expression. The former first woman president of Chicago’s Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, Mitchell celebrates endless possibility by “creating visionary worlds through music that bridge the familiar with the unknown.”

Roscoe Mitchell is considered one of the key figures in avant-garde jazz, integrating influences from everywhere—world music, funk, rock, classical—to create music that is at once beautiful and complex. He has been involved with the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), a Chicago-based nonprofit organization founded in the mid-1960s to advance new creative music. Mitchell has performed on more than 85 recordings and written in excess of 250 compositions in the jazz and classical realms. He continues to pass down his musical knowledge of composition and improvisation, both in educational and performance settings.

Fred Anderson (1929-2010) shaped the Chicago music scene more than perhaps any other figure. As a tenor saxophonist, he influenced generations of free improvisers. He co-founded the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM). As owner of the Velvet Lounge, he created a center for the city’s jazz and experimental music scenes which, according to the Chicago Tribune, “helped launch the careers of hundreds of players, among them the brilliant flutist Nicole Mitchell, the explosive percussionist Hamid Drake, the ascending trumpeters Corey Wilkes and Maurice Brown, the leonine saxophonist Edward Wilkerson, Jr. and the magisterial bassist Tatsu Aoki.”

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