

Williams Percussion Ensemble  
April 18, 2015

## TRANSIENTS

BRIAN SIMALCHIK '10  
*Ringing/Rising* (2014)

BRIAN SIMALCHIK is a composer of a wide range of chamber, percussion, and orchestral music that is emotionally direct and sonically rich. He has had premieres by Roomful of Teeth, the Berkshire Symphony, U.Va Percussion Ensemble, Williams Percussion Ensemble, I/O Ensemble, Opus Zero Band, Foot in the Door, Performance 20/20, and others. His music has been presented by organizations such as the Talea Ensemble (at The Stone in NYC), Close Encounters with Music, the Charlottesville Chamber Music Festival, the I/O New Music Festival, and Mass MoCA. He has been in residence at the Atlantic Center for the Arts (with composer Judith Shatin) and at Mass MoCA.

Brian holds degrees from The Hartt School (M.M.) and from Williams College (B.A.). He currently lives in Charlottesville, VA, where he works for the Charlottesville Symphony at the University of Virginia, a unique hybrid professional and teaching orchestra.

composer's note:

*Ringing/Rising* comes out of a deep love of the richness and complexity of the sounds that both triangles and cymbals make, and of the way that these sounds evoke the complex and detailed sounds we encounter in the world around us. For me, the rolling suspended cymbals that open the piece evoke the sounds of wind, water, distant traffic, or roaring engines. Bright, tolling triangles call to mind bells, wind chimes, alarms, or pulsing machines.

In the wider world, these kinds of sounds are the result of innumerable smaller actions. The complex sound that we call "wind," for example, might emerge from thousands of leaves flexing and striking each other as air moves through them. There is no "wind" except for the small actions of individual leaves. *Ringing/Rising* is an attempt to construct music that operates in this same way, though of course with far fewer moving parts. Each of the six players progresses independently through the same material, displaced in time from one another and performing on instruments that, though all technically the same, vary widely in the specifics of their sounds. The resultant sound slowly mutates, shifts, and swells.

DAVID LANG  
*cheating, lying, stealing* (1993, rev. 1995)

DAVID LANG is one of the most highly-esteemed and performed American composers writing today. His works have been performed around the world and in most of the great concert halls. Lang won the 2008 Pulitzer Prize in music for *the little match girl passion*, based on a fable by Hans Christian Andersen and Lang's own rewriting of the libretto to Bach's St. Matthew's Passion. The recording of the piece on Harmonia Mundi was awarded a 2010 Grammy Award for Best Small Ensemble Performance. Lang has also been the recipient of the Rome Prize, Le

Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, and was Musical America's 2013 Composer of the Year.

Lang's music is used regularly for ballet and modern dance around the world by such choreographers as Twyla Tharp, Susan Marshall, Edouard Lock, and Benjamin Millepied, who choreographed a new piece by Lang for the LA Dance Project at BAM in 2014. Lang's film work includes the score for Jonathan Parker's (*Untitled*), the music for the award-winning documentary *The Woodmans*, and the string arrangements for *Requiem for a Dream*, performed by the Kronos Quartet. His music is also on the soundtrack for Paolo Sorrentino's Oscar-winning *La Grande Bellezza* and the director's upcoming film, *Youth*. In addition to his work as a composer Lang is Professor of Composition at the Yale School of Music.

Lang is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York's legendary music collective Bang on a Can. His music is published by Red Poppy Music (ASCAP) and is distributed worldwide by G. Schirmer, Inc.

"With his winning of the Pulitzer Prize for *the little match girl passion* (one of the most original and moving scores of recent years), Lang, once a postminimalist enfant terrible, has solidified his standing as an American master." – The New Yorker

composer's note:

A couple of years ago, I started thinking about how so often when classical composers write a piece of music, they are trying to tell you something that they are proud of and like about themselves. Here's this big gushing melody, see how emotional I am. Or, here's this abstract hard-to-figure-out piece, see how complicated I am, see my really big brain. I am more noble, more sensitive, I am so happy. The composer really believes he or she is exemplary in this or that area. It's interesting, but it's not very humble. So I thought, what would it be like if composers based pieces on what they thought was wrong with them? Like, here's a piece that shows you how miserable I am. Or, here's a piece that shows you what a liar I am, what a cheater I am. I wanted to make a piece that was about something disreputable. It's a hard line to cross. You have to work against all your training. You are not taught to find the dirty seams in music. You are not taught to be low-down, clumsy, sly, and underhanded. In *cheating, lying, stealing*, although phrased in a comic way, I am trying to look at something dark. There is a swagger, but it is not trustworthy. In fact, the instruction in the score for how to play it says: *an ominous funk*.

RYAN ROSS SMITH

Libretto by K. Michael Fox

*Opera1* (2015)

RYAN ROSS SMITH is a composer and musician based in Troy, NY, and is currently a PhD candidate in Electronic Arts at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Smith's work with Animated Music Notation has led to performances throughout the U.S. and internationally, including lectures, workshops, and demonstrations at various conferences, festivals, and academic programs. Smith also curates [animatednotation.com](http://animatednotation.com), a website devoted to the emerging field of animated music notation and dynamic scoring practices. For more information on Smith's music, please visit: [ryanrosssmith.com](http://ryanrosssmith.com)

K. MICHAEL FOX (Spokane, Washington) is a New Media artist and composer. In his work, he is dedicated to the creation of complex systems of interactions which call upon the audience to engage with and explore the boundaries or possibilities of the system itself.

Stemming from a life-long interest in the complexity of natural and mechanical systems, Fox now devotes himself to understanding the self-organizing aesthetic systems that he creates in his work. In recent years, Fox has focused upon the relationship between humans and their portable computing devices as a basis for compositional form and network topologies. These experiments have led to a compositional practice in highly networked and distributed contexts and particularly with mobile computing devices, and using computer music tools such as SuperCollider.

At this time, he is attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY, where he is currently expecting his Master of Fine Arts in Electronic Arts in Spring 2015.

composer's note:

*Opera1* is the first iteration in a series of media operas using real-time animated music notation and generative libretti. Smith's animated music notation is based on a long-standing practice of real-time, generative scores for live performance. Smith's scores emerge from an often singular concept, the notation a real-time representation of those possibilities inherent within the concept, approached as the arbitrarily-ordering microscopics of the conceptual whole. Fox's libretti use material culled from online article sources, primarily news aggregates. The narrative emerges as a product of the (re)combination and (dis)ordering of current events and semantically-related, decontextualized topics.

Smith and Fox will realize the third piece in the series, *Opera3*, at The Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center [EMPAC] in Troy, NY in July, 2015 during a concentrated residency.

ERIC NATHAN  
*Bright Light* (2010)

ERIC NATHAN, a 2013 Rome Prize Fellow and 2014 Guggenheim Fellow, has garnered acclaim internationally through performances at the New York Philharmonic's 2014 Biennial, Carnegie Hall, Aldeburgh Music Festival, Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music, Aspen Music Festival, Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, Ravinia Festival Steans Institute, Yellow Barn, 2012 and 2013 World Music Days, and Louvre Museum. His music has additionally been featured by the Berlin Philharmonic's Scharoun Ensemble, Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, American Composers Orchestra, Omaha Symphony Chamber Orchestra, A Far Cry, and the JACK Quartet.

Recent projects include commissions from the New York Philharmonic for its CONTACT! series, Boston Symphony Orchestra for its Chamber Players, Tanglewood Music Center, and violinist Jennifer Koh for a new solo work to premiere in 2016-17. Nathan has additionally been honored with awards including ASCAP's Rudolf Nissim Prize, four ASCAP Morton Gould Awards, BMI's William Schuman Prize, Aspen Music Festival's Jacob Druckman Prize, a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and Leonard Bernstein Fellowship from the

Tanglewood Music Center.

Nathan served as Composer-in-Residence at the 2013 Chelsea Music Festival (New York) and 2013 Chamber Music Campania (Italy). He received his doctorate from Cornell and holds degrees from Yale (B.A.) and Indiana University (M.M.). Nathan serves as Visiting Assistant Professor in Composition at the Williams College Department of Music for the 2014-15 academic year, and begins his appointment as Assistant Professor of Music at the Brown University Department of Music in the fall of 2015.

composer's note:

The initial inspiration of *Bright Light* came from the artwork of Theresa Chong, whose series of works from 2007 ("GRACE," "G. MIGNON," "J. MAC," "LL AGO") present a myriad of small, lightly-colored pencil dots connected by thin lines on darkly-colored rice paper. Her works bring to mind solar constellations illuminated in a starry night sky. The texture of the art inspired the opening gestures of my piece, which converge, instantaneously fragment and disperse, and then slowly begin to converge again. These gestures move from areas of intense activity and light to sparser music featuring darker timbres. The piece moves to and from areas of brightness and darkness throughout its structure, culminating in a bright metallic ringing, a searing light that flashes before it fades into silence. *Bright Light* was composed for, and is dedicated to, Dominic Donato and the Purchase Percussion Ensemble.

ALEXANDRE LUNSQUI  
*Entresons.Recreo* (2009)

ALEXANDRE LUNSQUI was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil. After ten years based in New York City, he returned to Brazil as a Professor of Composition and Theory at the Universidade Estadual Paulista, UNESP. He studied at the University of Campinas (BM), University of Iowa (MA), Columbia University (DMA), and IRCAM (year-long cursus of composition and computer music). His music teachers include, "recordings of various kinds," Tristan Murail, José Augusto Mannis, Fred Lerdahl, and Jeremy Dale-Roberts, among other artists/creators from various areas.

His music background also includes Brazilian music, jazz, and contemporary improvisation. He has participated in Festivals such as Gaudeamus Music Week, Darmstadt, Manca, CrossDrumming, Aspekte, Time of Music, Musica Nova, Beijing Modern, Music at the Anthology, Creative Music Festival, PASIC, and Resonances.

He has been awarded the Virtuoso Prize given by the Ministry of Culture of Brazil and the "Funarte Premio de Musica Classica," given for his orchestral work *Linea.Reflexio*. A monographic CD with his chamber music was released in Spring 2008 - the project received the Petrobras Cultural Award. A CD featuring four composers from Sao Paulo was released in Fall 2008 by the Gravina Label. He received a Fromm Commission from the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University (2009-2010). Lunsqui is a Civitella Ranieri Fellow (2014) and the Composer-in-Residence for the 2014 Chelsea Music Festival (NYC).

composer's note:

I am very attracted to the idea of music as an environment. In *Entresons.Recreo*, I am attempting to create territories and a sense of journey. The listener (traveler) actively discovers his surroundings - the colors, the contours, the temperatures, the elements, and the overall geography. The word *Entresons* is a neologism that combines the words "entre" (meaning either to enter or between) and "sons" (sounds). It basically describes what the piece is about: sonic matter appearing and departing in multiple fashions, and the listener being immersed at the center of the resulting environment. Each percussionist is virtually treated like a source of energy. What springs into being is a mixture of sensorial stimuli (coming from delicate metals, water, voice, piercing whistles, internal rhythms, etc.), and the imaginary worlds behind the soundscapes.