



The UCSC Music Department Presents

April in Santa Cruz
Contemporary Music Festival

sfSoundGroup
Friday, April 10, 2015
7:30PM

Music Center Recital Hall
University of California, Santa Cruz



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April 10, 2015

**Works by UCSC Graduate Composition Students and
James Tenney: Guitar Music**

With guest artists
**Giacomo Fiore, sfSoundGroup,
San Francisco Conservatory Guitar Ensemble,
and guitarists from UC Santa Cruz**

Music by UCSC Graduate Composers

Solos (Dice Game) Andre Marquetti

Violin, alto saxophone, clarinet (B \flat , bass), trombone, and cello

In Time Andrew Smith

Alto saxophone, bass clarinet

Justifiably Strewn Ike Minton

Violin, alto saxophone, bass clarinet, bass trombone, and cello

variation xiv (in two parts) David Kant

Violin, alto saxophone, clarinet, bass trombone, and cello

sfSoundGroup: Matt Ingalls, clarinet and bass clarinet; Ben
Kreith, violin; Monica Scott, cello; Brendan Lai-Tong, trombone;
John Ingle, alto saxophone

—Intermission—

James Tenney: Complete Guitar Music

Curated and produced by Giacomo Fiore

Harmonium #2 (two guitars)

Giacomo Fiore and Larry Polansky, guitars

Water on the mountain... Fire in heaven (six electric guitars)

Jay Arms, Brian Baumbusch, Giacomo Fiore,
Larry Polansky, Lanier Sammons, Samuel Shaloub, guitars;
Andrew Smith, conductor

Spectrum #4

sfSoundGroup: Monica Scott, contrabass; Brendan Lai-Tong,
trombone; Benjamin Kreith, violin; John Ingle, alto recorder; Matt
Ingalls, bass clarinet; Matthew Goodheart, piano; Giacomo Fiore,
guitar; Mark Clifford, vibraphone

Septet (six electric guitars, and electric bass)

San Francisco Conservatory Guitar Ensemble: John Zientek,
Ryan Wallace, Zoë Holbrook, Sydd Urgola, Nathaniel Martinez, and
Roberto Borbone, guitars; Katrina Gavelin, bass;
David Tanenbaum, director

Notes on Pieces

Solos (Dice Game) A series of short solo compositions and solo improvisations interspersed with 'pointillist' ensemble sections. The Solos are composed by chance, from rolling a pair of dice to select musical material. The probabilities that emerge from the dice game music reinforce the Conductor's Neural Network digital performance environment. The neural network-learned patterns expectations match perfectly, or likely, the performer's solo. The aesthetic behind the Mozart's Dice Game music becomes the metaphor for the brain 'digital' simulation influencing various audio syntheses.

In time (2014) is based on a fragment of the poem "Notes on the Reality of the Self," by Jorie Graham, recalling Stanislavsky's notes to an actor. It is from her 1993 collection *Materialism*.

In time, when your sense of tempo will be more
firmly established, you will replace it by a more delicate
mental beat.

(Even Grisha could not understand.)

This was repeated with syncopation

Justifiably Strewn is a structured improvisation. It is structured, in that, the sections of the piece occur in specific periods of time, as noted in the score. Within these periods of time are motives and thematic materials, acting as guidelines that can be played by the performer as s/he chooses, creating an improvised feel. The different sections utilize material for each instrument in a way that allows the performer to achieve a variety of characters. The title juxtaposes contrasting ideas of alignment, preparation, and structure with indeterminacy, spontaneity, and the unpatterned.

The Guitar Music of James Tenney

Harmonium II (1977–2005) is James Tenney's first work for guitar, and one with a complicated genesis and performance history. Originally the work was composed for two guitars in equal temperament, and developed as a series of modulations between chords of increasing harmonic complexity (from a B major triad to a Gb17, the latter two overlapping triads a tritone apart which approximate the harmonics 1, 3, 5, 7, 11, and 17), played as hocketing arpeggios by the two guitarist. The premiere was given by Larry Polansky and Claudio Valentini in Toronto in March 1978; however, after a few additional performances Tenney decided to withdraw the piece, reworking it into a version for three harps (this time tuned $\sim 14\text{¢}$ apart for increased intonational accuracy), which he called *Harmonium III*. More than twenty-five years later Tenney, who had since returned to the United States to teach at the California Institute for the Arts, offered a further revised version of the piece to guitarist John Schneider for consideration; *Harmonium II* was thus revived at a Microfest concert in March 2003. This latest incarnation maintains the same harmonic trajectory and hocketing textures of the original, while also incorporating a tuning difference of $\sim 33\text{¢}$ between the guitars. This finer harmonic fabric highlights the small-step motions of the individual pitches in each of the modulation, and creates a beguiling sonority. From a historical and critical standpoint, it provides the first evidence of Tenney's refined and flexible approach to the intonation of fretted instruments—as further exemplified by his later works for guitar.

Water on the mountain... Fire in heaven takes an altogether different approach to achieve (quasi-) just intervals on standard-issue guitars. The six guitars are pitched ~ 17 cents apart from one another, yielding a complete 72-step division of the octave. Although tempered, this tuning results in significantly closer approximations of intervals up to the 11th harmonic, compared to 12-tone equal temperament, while also maintaining the same possibilities for modulation. Like *Changes* (a piece for six harps in 72-tone equal temperament from the same period), this piece consists of an algorithmically-generated series of modulations, a sort of “random walk” in harmonic space that will eventually return (after much meandering) to the original starting pitch. The music's two independent voice are shared among the six guitars, effectively transforming them into a single hyper-instrument.

In the 1990s Tenney moved towards a different compositional approach, possibly as an attempt to rebuke accusations of “excessive

euphony” that accompanied some of his earlier output. The pieces in the *Spectrum* series reach much higher in the harmonic series than his previous music; the guitar part in *Spectrum 4* includes partials as high as the 65th harmonic. Unlike the other pieces on this program, however, here the fundamental never changes. The music, which is generated through a statistical feedback algorithm named after the “dissonant counterpoint” practices of Cowell, Seeger, and Ruggles, grows progressively denser and louder, approximating a swelling profile that cuts off abruptly once it reaches its apex.

In *Septet* (1981) three of the six electric guitars undergo slight tuning adjustments, allowing each to provide a justly-tuned harmonic interval over the fundamental pitch A. The piece unfolds first as a canon highlighting the rhythmic relationships of the harmonic series (what Henry Cowell would have called a Rhythmicana), then increases in harmonic complexity, as players sound the partial corresponding to the rhythmic value they are playing. Thus a perfect fifth (which is defined by a harmonic ratio of 3:2 to the fundamental) sounds three times for every two instances of the fundamental; the major third (5:4) sounds five times over four, and so forth. At the mid-point of the piece, the music pivots around the pitch E (the twelfth harmonic of A), re-interpreting it rhythmically and harmonically as the new fundamental. The rhythms and pitches progressively change to sound a harmonic seventh tonality on E, until the piece finally dissolves into unison Es. — Notes on the Tenney guitar pieces by Giacomo Fiore

Brian Baumbusch is a composer and multi-instrumentalist based in Santa Cruz, California. He is the director of The Lightbulb Ensemble, a new music percussion ensemble that champions instrument building and American Gamelan. He holds degrees from Bard College and Mills College, and is currently pursuing his Doctoral degree at UC Santa Cruz.

Italian-born guitarist and musicologist **Giacomo Fiore** lives and works in San Francisco. His research focuses on U.S. experimental music, intonation, and performance; he has premiered more than a dozen new works for justly-tuned, electric, and classical guitar, and published articles in JSAM, TEMPO, Classical Guitar, and the San Francisco Classical Voice. He is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Tangents Guitar Series, and teaches at the San Francisco Conservatory and the University of San Francisco.

David Kant is a composer, performer, and UC Santa Cruz graduate student interested in the intersection of art, music, and computation. My recent work has explored chaotic circuit networks, the soundscapes of bioluminescent phytoplankton, and machine deconstructions of my favorite pop songs.

Composer **Andre Marquetti's** musical studies have included Chicago's AACM and Stockhausen Summer Courses. Andre studied composition with John Eaton in Chicago, Anthony Braxton and Alvin Lucier at Wesleyan University, and UCSC music faculty. His compositions have been performed in Houston, Chicago, Connecticut, New York, Brazil, and Korea, and by the Flux String Quartet, the LA Percussion Quartet, Wu Man, Koto's shakuhachi player Yoshio Kurahashi, Germany's duo Ahlert and Schwab, and pianist Amy Briggs Dissanayake.

Ike Minton is a composer, keyboardist, and oboist. Currently a D.M.A. student in composition at the University of California, Santa Cruz, he has also studied at Southern Illinois University and the University of Hawai'i Manoa. As a composer, his main interest is composing for instruments from the Western European musical tradition combined with instruments and cultural traditions across the world. He also enjoys studying the relationship of mathematic ratios in musical structures and rhythm

Lanier Sammons is a composer, performer, and recordist who teaches in the Music and Performing Arts Department at CSU Monterey Bay. For more information, please visit laniersammons.com

Over the past decade, **sfSound** has emerged as one of the most fiercely innovative contemporary music organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area. Their performing ensemble, sfSoundGroup, create their own collaborative works in the context of the avant-garde, from the ivory tower to the underground. Their programs feature original compositions, improvisations, new commissions, and standard New Music repertoire with an international scope and a distinctly West Coast spin -- honoring, and striving to continue, the Bay Area's critical historical role in the development of the American Experimental tradition. Since 2003, their home concert series (sfSoundSeries) has presented a mix of solo, chamber, and large ensemble works, including conceptual and theatrical works and live electronic music, often emphasizing the continuum between notated composition and

free improvisation. In addition, they present an annual 3-day festival of tape music (The San Francisco Tape Music Festival), host a 24/7 Internet radio station (sfSoundRadio), and frequently collaborate with other musicians and institutions in various projects.

Samuel Shalhoub is a multi-instrumentalist, composer and conductor, who enjoys performing in a variety of ensembles. He is currently obtaining his MA in Performance Practice from UC Santa Cruz and hopes to graduate in May, 2016.

Andrew C. Smith is a composer and keyboardist living in Santa Cruz, California. His music often involves just intonation tunings, repetition, and connections with language. He co-organizes the composer-run record label and concert producer Indexical. He studied English and music composition at Willamette University and Trinity College Dublin. He is currently a D.M.A. student in music composition at UC Santa Cruz.

Under the direction of **David Tanenbaum**, the San Francisco Conservatory Guitar Ensemble performs regularly on campus and appears often throughout Northern California. In fall 2000 the ensemble went on a three city tour with composer Steve Reich, performing Electric Counterpoint, and a year later it performed the U.S. premiere of Terry Riley's Y Bolanzero. The ensemble has commissioned and premiered many works, including those by composers Steven Mackey, Jorge Liderman, Dan Becker, Belinda Reynolds and many student composers. Most recently the ensemble has performed the U.S. premiere of 6x6x6 by Yiorgos Vassilandonakis in 2008, recorded Measures of Turbulence by Steven Mackey for Naxos in 2011, and appeared at the GFA Convention in Charleston in 2012.

James Tenney (1934–2006) is widely considered one of the most important composers and theoretical thinkers of the latter half of the 20th century. He taught at a number of schools, including York University in Toronto, California Institute for the Arts, and, in 1975–6, UC Santa Cruz.

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