

wasn't necessarily a priority—theorizing and speculating on the nature of things that matter, from art to politics (that's everything, right?) and the numinous to the transcendent. To this day, separated only by geography, Philip is still the model friend. I thank him for exposing his true feelings about my leaving Omaha in writing and titling Come Back, and for allowing me to rename it Pick Up Your Phone More Often. Much love, my friend.

Philip's piece is written for three objects, at an unfixed tempo, and without specified dynamic markings; 8/4's the meter. There's a single macro process driving the piece forward, the addition of a sixteenth note pulse somewhere over the three objects. The performer is suggested to repeat each measure as many times as they'd like; the repeats are "open." The performer may go as far into the piece as they'd like, and then must come back. Therefore, I could choose to play the first ten measures, then return and have given a valid performance. Today, I will be premiering the work in its entirety.

OREGON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

AT SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

refocused

Jared Brown

Graduate Percussion Recital

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music Performance.

This recital is under the direction of Dr. Terry Longshore.

Music at SOU

April 14, 2017 • 5pm

SOU Music Recital Hall

Schneider Art Museum

Welcome, and thank you for coming to this concert. I truly appreciate your taking the time to participate and share in this experience as I present, “refocused.” I’d also like to thank the Oregon Center for the Arts and the Schneider Museum of Art for providing the space to produce this concert, and my collaborators, Matthew Reynolds, Nick Canepa, and Philip Kolbo for contributing their unique skills and voices to this project. Finally, I owe quite a bit of gratitude to my teacher and mentor, Dr. Terry Longshore, for his endearing qualities and unconditional support while I’ve grown in my studies here at Southern Oregon University. I am grateful to them and to you, my ~~prisoners~~ *audience* for the evening. On to the show...

I need to put a few things to you before we begin (after the advice of a roommate: “Context is good.”) To put it simply, I'm a bit bored by the traditional academic recital. "refocused" represents a traversing of new creative avenues. From exploring collaboration between music and movement or gesture and tape to the performance of amplified Dadaist rituals and the relation between intended compositional process and the spirit of improvisation, the primary contribution of the percussionist – the idiom and act of percussive performance – is intended to serve a secondary function for the duration of the evening.

So, this concert may be slightly unorthodox; our conditioned aesthetic views of the “recital” may be tested a bit. Unless one must sit, I invite you to remain standing on the stage. Feel free to lean against the back wall or congregate in the middle, take a chair when you’d like to sit. Also, note the change of location at intermission. The second portion of the recital will be taking place at the Schneider Museum of Art across campus. The two pieces performed there will take on the vibe of brief, sound installations where the audience is encouraged to make their way through the museum or out into the courtyard—proximity will determine dynamic reception, and therefore perception. We’ll have the opportunity of walking to the space together following the first half.

Again, thank you for coming. I look forward to discussion after the program. – JB

Schneider Art Museum

Part II

Cope (2017)

Jared Brown (b. 1992)

premiere performance

Come Back (2016)

Philip Kolbo (b. 1993)

premiere performance

I began writing **Cope** in December 2016 after Matthew Reynolds asked me to present a piece at the Crater Renaissance Academy’s Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration the following month. My initial reactions to the idea of writing a piece for such an event in this time of social unrest and political uneasiness caused me to feel a bit overwhelmed...

“Cope” is born out of a desire to deconstruct systems, to simplify and rationalize a set of specific ideas in search of the ideal – a somewhat dangerous notion depending on where you call home. It is not an inherently political work. (Although, one of the earliest sketches *was* dedicated to the memory of Eric Garner, whose final, pleading, haunting words were, “I can’t breathe,” as several officers squeezed the life out of him on a sidewalk.) To me, this piece is an opportunity to simply reflect.

The work is purely process-based; however, the processes are constructed in the moment. I’m working with a set of six familiar pitches: G, A, B, D, E, and F#. Over the past seven years, I’ve found the capabilities of this set fascinating. “Cope” is the simplest presentation of this set I’ve composed thus far.

Composing is an interest of mine, getting to work closely with composer-friends on their work is a great passion. Perhaps my greatest comrade and confidant, Philip Kolbo and I go back to the earlier days of my collegiate endeavors at the University of Nebraska–Omaha. We’d spend whole days – when he wasn’t trying to get me to be more physically active or to give a damn about Soylent; when practicing

I intend to perform Aphasia and Echolalia *attaca* as a bit of an experiment. The respective “subjects” are not related, but may find solace in the notion of perhaps finding a friend had they existed in the same universe...

SOU Music Recital Hall

Part I

XY for five tuned drums (1997) Michael Gordon (b. 1956)
featuring movement by Matthew Reynolds

Aphasia for singer and tape (2010) Mark Applebaum (b. 1967)

Echolalia: 22 Amplified and Signal Processed Dadaist Rituals (2006)
featuring sound design and processing by Nick Canepa

Employing dynamic, hand-to-hand crossfading and seemingly tectonic polyrhythmic shifts as propellants – “as fast as possible” – Michael Gordon’s **XY** is a marathon for solo percussionist. Rhythmic ratios of increasing complexity, e.g. 1:1, 2:3, 4:5, 5:6, 12:5, 10:6, etc., provide contrast and tense momentum as the number of measures allowed for crossfading contracts and expands. When used as the entire rhythmic foundation of a musical work, polyrhythms transcend classification as mere rhythmic figures. Instead, simultaneous, conflicting ideas produce and serve macro-musical systems and functions. As each polyrhythmic shift or variance occurs, a unique collection of harmonic and melodic sets is exposed and the work ceases to be an exercise in playing polyrhythms quickly. Singable tunes emerge from a nearly indiscernible texture and listening becomes more engaging.

This piece is loud, fast, difficult, and exhilarating to perform. Like an unformed diamond, it’s raw and visceral, yet sharply elegant and proportionate when chiseled and shaped. I think this is why XY remains so alluring twenty years after its conception (that’s like eighty-five in cello years!). Michael’s careful craftsmanship and expertise for that sense of proportion allow for seemingly unfathomable, cacophonous rhythmic and harmonic ideas on the page to be 1) manageable by a performer, 2) accessible (and discernable—an important distinction) by a listener, and 3) wonderfully impactful if actively engaged by both entities.

In the spirit of a John Cage and Merce Cunningham “happening”, XY will cohabitate the performance space with movement by Matthew Reynolds. Matthew is one of the first friends I made upon my arrival in Oregon nearly two years ago. His love for, support of, and patience with me have created an enduring collaborative spirit between the two of us and I’m really looking forward to further projects with this thoughtful, courageous human, and dear friend. Though his movement may or may not be inspired by my simultaneous creative efforts – fair warning: he will be moving through the audience – I am honored to share the space with him and trust his intent is similarly aligned with mine in exploring a collaborative spirit and in line with the aforementioned third designation given to Michael Gordon’s work.

The next two works highlight the efforts of electroacoustic composer, Mark Applebaum. I consider Mark one of the most important composers of our time. His works are insightful and daring, always pushing at the constraints of aesthetic comfort. They are often funny and even provocative. (Rather admittedly, I guess I may also be subconsciously drawn to Mark’s work as a result of our shared reverence for language and an appreciation for the writings of Christopher Hitchens... I digress.)

I became interested in Mark’s music after performing in the second decade quartet at the Midwest premiere of *30*, a coordinated “happening-esque,” percussion collage of three simultaneous autonomous pieces – which was actually premiered on this stage by the SOU Percussion Ensemble in 2013. The concluding moments of the piece feature staggered, “Applebaum gesturing” by the quartet. This naturally led to learning Aphasia.

Aphasia was written for Nicholas Isherwood, the vocalist whose contribution has been manipulated by Mark to every extreme to create quite an intriguing soundscape. The precise gestures for the work are rhythmically prescribed and meticulously detailed, e.g. “M. 34 – Peace: two split (V-shaped) fingers pointing upward with the palm facing the audience and fingers three and four inwardly curled and held down by the thumb, the arm mostly outstretched (approximately 65%) at shoulder height, as if flashing a peace sign.”

Mark insists that “the hand gestures represent a kind of alien, pre-verbal, rhythmicized sign language. Hand (and arm gestures) are to be made

definitively and with absolute confidence. They are to be vivid and energetic. Paradoxically, the remainder of the body remains still, seated, formal. The face stares blankly at a fixed point in the middle of the audience and remains unchanging, expressionless.

The performer should not appear “searching,” or project a process of discovery of self-realization. Rather, the audience beholds a foreign ritual with the flattest of affects – automatic, robotic, pre-formed, steady, practiced, habitual, and silent. Histrionic or theatric comportments (beyond the admittedly stylized blankness) are unnecessary and unwelcome; the piece’s expressivity resides in the very straightforwardness of the gestures themselves.”

Echolalia is constructed with similar aesthetic principles, i.e. “...actions of musical *conventions* in some alien culture,” “the player is not to ‘act’ in a histrionic manner for the audience,” “the rituals are to be performed rapidly, energetically, and deliberately, with great concentration and focus, with a tremendous sense of purpose and gravity.” However, there is a slightly more emergent, alarming truth to the nature of this “subject’s” efforts. Their attempts at musical expression are hindered by a “[suffered] apraxia that manifests itself in a completely different medium, a series of 22 Dadaist rituals performed in rapid succession. These may be divided into four principal action types: (1) *Combining/Attaching*; (2) *Mixing/Syncretizing*; (3) *Separating/Atomizing*; and (4) *Treating/Deforming*. The seemingly absurd series of actions are executed obsessively with a personal and resolute clarity, however esoteric and hermetic. The work ends, literally, on a conventional note... The player may exhibit a sense of surprise at the emergence of the triangle beater [and] may pause momentarily before reflectively striking the triangle, the only gesture performed in a relaxed manner.”

The sounds resulting from the execution of these rituals are picked up by two contact microphones on the table as well as two mics suspended overhead. These sounds are being manipulated at all times by sound effects designed by Nick Canepa and myself. I recently met Nick back in January of this year at a planning meeting as producers of the Oregon Fringe Festival. I quickly sought him out to collaborate on Echolalia. Nick’s drive as an emerging sound designer and artist is both inspiring and reassuring – keep an eye out for this name!