

uclaFLUX
Winter 2021 Recital Program Notes
Friday, March 12, 2021, 7pm

Kyle Newmaster (b. 1975)
Machinations, for French Horn and Bass Clarinet (2003)
Rachel Boehl, horn
Eric Pearce, bass clarinet

Kyle Newmaster's duet for horn and bass clarinet creates a rich conversation that explores the virtuosity of both instruments.

Kyle Newmaster has worked as a film, television and video game composer as well as a professional trumpet player for over fifteen years. He received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, and his Master's degree from the Eastman School of Music. His work can be found in shows including the 2019 CBS series *Blood & Treasure*, Hulu's *Into the Dark: Pooka Lives!* and games such as Entertainment Art's *Star Wars: Battlefront 1* and *2*. In a 2020 interview, Newmaster attributes his musical influences to games and films from the eighties, including titles in the horror, action and science fiction genres, not to mention his love for *Star Wars*. As a professional trumpet player, he has worked and performed with the Seth Macfarlane Big Band and The Brian Setzer Orchestra. Newmaster has also recorded for television shows and films including *American Dad*, *Family Guy*, *Cleveland*, and *America's Got Talent*.

Newmaster's cinematic influences can be heard in *Machinations*, written for Ken Fischer and Rick Todd in 2003. The piece is based around argumentative motives, and both performers alternate between energetic and subdued exchanges, with a heavy use of octatonic scales. Newmaster's timbral choice balances the combative nature of the thematic material, as the dark tones of the horn and bass clarinet naturally resonate very well together.

At the close of the exposition the mood shifts as the horn begins a lyric solo with measured accompaniment by the bass clarinet. The initial theme briefly returns again, but the voices flip before the secondary material comes back with bass clarinet drones. As this interchange continues, the two voices join together in counterpoint. The dueling themes return for a final exchange until the piece comes to close with a clashing dissonance.

Program note by Rachel Boehl and Eric Pearce

James Luff (b. 1987):
Bassoon and Double Bass (2019)
(Run Time ~6')

Taylor Lee, bassoon
Joel Bickel, bass

Bassoon and Double Bass is a composition premiered on April 9th, 2019, by 840, a London-based experimental and minimalist concert series currently curated by composers

Alex Nikiporenko and James Luff. Receiving praise from *The Guardian* as well as *BBC Radio 3*, the 840 Concert Series challenges composers to write for a unique instrumentation in each program, forcing young artists to diversify and expand their compositional strategies. The name “840” is inspired by one of Erik Satie’s quotes within the piece *Vexations*: “In order to play the theme 840 times in succession, it would be advisable to prepare oneself beforehand, and in the deepest silence, by serious immobilities.”

Alongside works by Tom Johnson and Mary Jane Leach, the aptly named *Bassoon and Double Bass* was one of 9 works premiered during 840’s *New Music for Bassoon and Double Bass* program recorded live at the Iklectik Art Lab in Waterloo. This particular instrumentation was chosen because of the relative scarcity of duets written for double bass and bassoon. Composers were encouraged to write pieces showcasing the vast resonance and newfound dexterity of these largely accompanying, bass instruments.

“This piece aims at a sense of steady progress, always changing and developing yet without any clear goal. It is made from fragments of various lengths which loop in strict cycles and are then combined, layered, arranged and disrupted intuitively to form the final piece.”

(James Luff, 2019)

Performers are instructed to maintain a steady sense of pulse in spite of an almost completely static harmonic atmosphere. Listeners should tune into the interplay between the repeating, melodic fragments which combine with, interrupt, and disrupt one another. The playing style is to be plain and delicate - with little to no dynamic contrast, a strict tempo, and with the bassoon and bass voices dissolving into one another so as to make the audience wonder which instrument is sounding each part.

James Luff, based in Norwich and London, earned his Bachelor of Music in composition from Goldsmiths College, University of London and later earned a Masters in Philosophy from University College London. His mentors include Kevin Volans, Walter Zimmerman, Laurence Crane, and Matteo Fargion.

Program note by Taylor Lee and Joel Bickel

Witold Lutosławski (1913-1994):

Trio for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon (1945)

i. Allegro Moderato

Emma Mooradian- Soprano Saxophone

Eric Pearce- Clarinet

Evelyn Coffey- Bassoon

Witold Lutosławski is one of the most notable Polish composers of the second half of the twentieth century. Born in 1913, Lutosławski spent his youth and young adulthood in the turbulent years between World Wars. Lutosławski studied composition at Warsaw

University, and had his first success as a composer at the age of twenty when the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra premiered his orchestral dance based on the music for a ballet about the life of 1st-century Islamic caliph Harun Al-Rashid.

Lutosławski's matriculation coincided with the outbreak of World War II, and his hopes of studying composition in Paris were dashed by the German invasion of Poland in 1939. During the war, Lutosławski made a living as an arranger-pianist and served as a radio operator, where he was briefly captured by German soldiers, escaping while being marched to a prison camp. During the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, Lutosławski was forced to flee the city, losing the majority of his scores and sketches in the process.

The post-war political climate of the Eastern bloc was precarious for composers as Stalinist ideals condemned modern works and implemented strict artistic censorship. For the majority of this period, Lutosławski was unable to compose as he wished without criticism. Following Stalin's death and the subsequent cultivation of the arts in the 1950s, Lutosławski's composition style flourished. His *Concerto for Orchestra* (1954) earned him critical acclaim and marked a new stage of compositional maturity for him. Throughout the rest of his career, Lutosławski composed four symphonies, multiple concertos, choral works, and numerous chamber instrumental works, accomplishing a canon which reflects the exploration of contemporary styles in the post-war era. Lutosławski's significant oeuvre, distinctive compositional styles, and intense creativity, have distinguished him as one of the most compelling composers of the twentieth century.

Written in 1944 and premiered in 1945, Lutosławski's *Trio for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon* is an experiment into the "world of free tonality," as he puts it. He continues, "I chose wind instruments because my research into pitch, rhythm and the organisation of sound could be carried out in the simplest way with their help." The beginnings of this piece are said to be found in Lutosławski's experiments with counterpoint. In early September of 1945, the trio was premiered by Seweryn Snieckowski, Teofil Rudnicki and Bazyli Orłow in Cracow, Poland.

Lutosławski's *Trio for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon- I. Allegro Moderato* is a work which calls for a great deal of playfulness from its players. This is particularly challenging in a virtual collaboration process because changes in dynamics and articulations are often less noticeable in recordings than they would be in a live performance. Because of the lack of an oboe player in our uclaFLUX class this quarter, the oboe part is played on a soprano saxophone, which offers a set of issues particular to the soprano saxophone, as it must try to match the timbre and articulation style of an oboe. The nature of quarantined chamber music tends to constrict musicality, as the three parts must be played perfectly in time with a click track in order for them to fit together. Throughout this movement, however, we tried to bring out musicality in other ways, such as with exaggerated accents, tenutos, articulation patterns, and various other techniques.

Program note by Emma Mooradian, Eric Pearce, Evelyn Coffey