

Ian Wiese
composition

Recital in partial fulfillment of the
Doctor of Musical Arts degree, 2024
Student of John Heiss

Sunday, December 4, 2022
12:00 p.m.
Brown Hall

PROGRAM

Ian Wiese

is greater than c squared (2022)

Honor Hickman, flute
Corinne Foley, oboe
Tao Ke, clarinet
Rafe Schaberg, piano

Divergent Points (2021)

Morgan Mackenzie Short, harp

The Selkie Child (2021)

Opening/Finding the Child
Lullaby
The Storm and Saving Father Haimish
Finale

Anna Kevelson, flute
Aidan Garrison, viola
Morgan Mackenzie Short, harp
Doria Hughes, narrator

Suite for Reed Quintet (2020)

Sonatina
Sarabande
Ragtime

Corinne Foley, oboe
Tristen Broadfoot, clarinet
Rayna DeYoung, alto saxophone
Megan Dillon, bass clarinet
TJ Vculek, bassoon

Midnight Train (2021)

Aaron Larget-Caplan, guitar

Lyric Pieces for Solo Flute in C (2021)

Hesitating

Moving

Dancing

Stretching

Hurrying

Honor Hickman, flute

Two Mazurkas (2020)

Slightly More Than Topsy

After Beethoven

Mathew Lanning, piano

Four Short Pieces for Piano (2021)

Inversions

Tremolos Rewrite

Ascending and Descending

Chorale

Mathew Lanning, piano

Two Preludes (2019)

Prelude on the C Acoustic Scale
Ragtime Prelude

Mathew Lanning, piano

Violin Sonata No. 1 (2020)

Mesto e misterioso – Alla Marcia
Andante cantabile
Scherzo à Valse

Tong Chen, violin
Yandi Chen, piano

is greater than c squared

is greater than c squared, keeping in line with Exponential Ensemble's desire to play pieces inspired by mathematics, science, and literacy, is heavily inspired by two related mathematical theories. Of more common knowledge is the Pythagorean Theorem, expressed as $a^2+b^2=c^2$ (a squared plus b squared equals c squared). This equation shows that a right triangle when mapped onto a flat plane will have both sides forming the right angle, when squared, equal the length of the hypotenuse squared.

That theorem does not apply to a sphere, however. In the so-called Greenwaldian Theorem, as coined by the show writers of *Futurama* and attributed to Dr. Sarah Greenwald, the two sides of a right triangle when mapped onto a sphere will be greater than that of the hypotenuse when all values are squared, or shown as the equation $a^2+b^2>c^2$. Although Dr. Sarah Greenwald was not the originator of this idea (though she is flattered it is attributed to her), it is quite a novel approach to adapting an otherwise commonplace theorem. Since these theories are so closely related, I thought how to directly translate something akin to the results of the equation into music. This now manifests as two versions of the same melody or harmonic structure, once played where everything is of equivalent length (equals c^2) or where the third line is either longer or shorter than that of the other two lines (is greater than c^2 , also manipulated artificially to its opposite in the equation). *is greater than c squared* was premiered at Mostly Modern Festival 2022 in Saratoga Springs, NY by guest ensemble Exponential Ensemble.

Divergent Points

Divergent Points was written during the second year of the global COVID-19 pandemic as part of composer Jenni Brandon and Polyphony Arts Management Online Composition Workshop – Composing for the Harp. When presented with the prospects of new music for the harp, I sought to categorize and develop the nature of the harp's extended techniques, or non-standard playing concepts that lead to a variety of different sounds an instrument can produce. I categorized the techniques from those that were extremely dry to those that were extremely wet with varying gradations in between, leading to them being sequenced in the piece as part of the overall development. For the longest time, however, I could not figure out a title. Suddenly, in a workshop with Brandon, I uttered the sentence fragment "...all of [the piece's] divergent points" and immediately stopped there. I had the title without realizing it, especially upon using it to reflect on Igor Stravinsky's famous drawing of a representation of his own music.

Divergent Points was premiered digitally by Joseph Rebman and in-person by Morgan Short.

The Selkie Child

The Selkie Child is the final collaboration result between storyteller Doria Hughes and myself, a flute/viola/harp trio with fully adapted story of the mystical Selkie boy. A selkie is a furred harbor seal that lives off the coast of the Orkneys and Shetlands in

the Scottish North Sea. The locals believe that the harbor seals are magical beings, capable of shedding their skins and becoming humans to walk on land. One day, Father Haimish and Mother Fiona find a small boy on the beach wrapped in a strange fur blanket. They realize quickly that the boy is a selkie who shed his skin; being that Haimish and Fiona have no child of their own, they adopt the boy and hide his seal skin so that he may no longer transform back into a selkie. All of that changes one day when Haimish, out fishing in his small boat, gets caught in a massive storm.

The Selkie Child was commissioned by Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble as part of their Playdate concert series. It was premiered with storyteller Doria Hughes on the Storytime! concerts on 12/11/2021.

Suite for Reed Quintet

Suite for Reed Quintet was commissioned by Kalliope Reed Quintet. Over the course of the three-movement work, the quintet experiments with large forms and different agile combinations of each instrument. The first movement is a sonatina, which is a shorter version of a sonata. Each instrument gets a moment to pair up with one or two others in the ensemble and play small fragments of ideas that form into larger ideas. The sarabande the forms the second movement plays with the darker sounds of the reed quintet, paired up with the sultry and forbidden baroque dance. The last movement is a funny, witty, and sardonic ragtime, where the ensemble tries desperately to avoid playing a rag and instead tries its best to navigate (clumsily) a canon before giving into the rag. Each player gets a moment to solo over the rest of the ensemble on several measures of their fragment of the melody before ending with a splat.

Suite for Reed Quintet was premiered digitally and in-person by Kalliope Reed Quintet.

Midnight Train

Midnight Train was composed as the second in a series of contributions to the New Lullaby Project of guitarist Aaron Larget-Caplan. Taking inspiration from the sound of the wheels of the Red Line coasting over the tracks and making a knocking sound as they pass over the division between two rails, the piece attempts to lull the listener into sleep, much as the real-life sound and feeling attempts to do to me every night on the T.

Lyric Pieces for Solo Flute in C

Lyric Pieces for Solo Flute in C come shortly after the composition of *The Selkie Child* for flute, viola, harp, and narrator. In the process of writing the narrated trio, I had some leftover material, especially in the flute, that could constitute a piece of its own. Remembering that Mr. Heiss had composed a collection titled *Four Lyric Pieces* for Flute Alone when working with Darius Milhaud at Aspen Music Festival, I opted to take those leftover sketches and make my own set of lyric pieces for flute. These pieces follow in the same character vein of the Heiss original, although rather than

being named for the tempo and interpretation markings of each of the movements, I opted to give each movement a title and character through said title. Being that the previous compositions I had written for solo flute also relied heavily on extended technique and not as much raw playing, I limited myself in each movement to a single extended technique that would complement what I had written, rather than relying on the extended techniques to make the color of the piece for me.

The first movement, "Hesitating", was the impetus of the collection and the one directly based off excess material from *The Selkie Child*. The main motif comes from an expansion I had written on the Scottish tune *The Grey Selkie of Sule Skerrie*, although the tune is no longer recognizable in both the interpretive context and in how the rest of the piece is composed. "Moving" became the immediate, gut reaction contrast to the first movement. "Dancing" echoes some of the energy from "Moving", although it is far staid and in control, representing the grace of a ballet rather than the forward momentum that is uncontrolled motion. "Stretching" gives the flutist a break from the regimented sense of meter and time in the piece, being based entirely on gesture in an ametric movement. "Hurrying" ends the *Lyric Pieces* with a high energy blast, taking some minor inspiration from *The Great Train Race* by flutist-composer and extended technique pioneer Ian Clarke.

Two Mazurkas

Two Mazurkas was written for the second collaboration between the studio of Victor Rosenbaum and the New England Conservatory Composition Department. This collaboration was titled "The Mazurka – Re-Imagined." The first of the two mazurkas, titled "Slightly More than a Little Topsy," imitates a pianist drunk at the piano trying to play music that sounds good but is not lining up properly most of the time. Strange combinations of rhythms play into a drunken stupor, capped off with a non-sequitur quotation from Beethoven's *Für Elise*. The second, titled "After Beethoven," is a pastiche on the second movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 in A minor. I had the unusual idea that the world-renowned second movement could possibly work as a mazurka, and after tinkering with it for a few hours I found that with the right choices it could. Also pay attention for a brief intrusion by Philip Glass!

Four Short Pieces for Piano

Four Short Pieces for Piano is both an homage to and modelled after the 1961 *Four Short Pieces* by my studio teacher, John Heiss. I had the idea to follow his pieces after I had taken the time to orchestrate his 1961 and 2014 anthologies for wind quintet as a gift to him. The first movement, "Inversions," is based on inverting the same set of intervals that appear repeatedly (based on a very short improvisation that I did at the piano). It is also the shortest and most compact of the four, clocking in at only six measures. The second, "Tremolo Rewrite," as the title suggests, is a rewritten version of the tremolos concept that I had for the second movement; the first version of this piece was meandering and dull, so I cannibalized it and created this rewrite. The movement utilizes roughly the same pitch collection written as a vertical (the chords that tremolo) and a horizontal (the descending line that emerges from the chords).

The third, "Ascending and Descending," mirrors the first piece in the manner of inverting the same intervals over each other, however, in this case, the intervals of a fourth and a fifth are mapped out between the white and black keys of the piano, staying mostly exclusively to one set of keys or the other. The last movement, "Chorale," imitates the chorale that forms the last of the Heiss 1961 pieces.

Two Preludes

Two Preludes was written as the first pair of pieces in collaboration with the piano studio of Victor Rosenbaum. The first in the pair, "Prelude on the C Acoustic Scale," uses a Philip Glass-like ostinato to explore the harmonies that exist in the C acoustic scale (C-D-E-F#-G-A-Bb-C). What results is an odd combination of major chords, diminished chords, minor chords, and one augmented chord in that order. The second, "Ragtime Prelude," uses the music of Scott Joplin and later rag composers like William Bolcom to be far more aggressive and in-your-face with its ideas, less meditative and more attention grabbing.

Violin Sonata No. 1

Violin Sonata No. 1 is the result of a collaboration between fellow Doctorate of Musical Arts student Sungmi Park and myself. Adhering to somewhat strict musical forms, this sonata moves through a fast movement, a slow movement, and a scherzo that have all been altered slightly from what we as listeners would expect. Following a slow introduction that will inform how the other movements are constructed, the first movement freely adapts its opening melody into a loose sonata, with an interjection of related but still different enough material to allow what initially feels like a restart of the movement. The second movement spins out an adagio into a three-voice canon that strings together relentless sixteenth notes a few beats apart from one another in two different keys. The third movement combines a scherzo with a strange and aggressive waltz that loses and gains notes freely, before an unexpected cadenza leads the violinist through a recap of all the movements and the waltz returns to end rather abruptly.

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