



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS INTERNATIONAL CONCERT SERIES

Saturday 11 February 2023
Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall

ELISION

Joshua Hyde (saxophones)

Carl Rosman (clarinets)

Alex Waite (piano)

ELISION



Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**

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Programme

Golnaz Shariatzadeh – machine euphoria, for solo saxophone
(world premiere)

Bethan Morgan-Williams – Gêmdisyn, for E flat clarinet

Einar Torfi Einarson – Other proportions: rough path by extinction
(virgula ligatura), for saxophone and piano

Evan Johnson – contemptus mundi, for clarinet in C and piano
(world premiere)

Interval

Dominik Karski – Streamforms VI (Nocturnal), for solo piano
(world premiere)

Anne Cleare – luna (the eye that opens the other eye), for alto saxophone

Richard Barrett – flechtwerk, for clarinet in A and piano

Programme Notes

Golnaz Shariatzadeh – machine euphoria, for solo saxophone

Machine euphoria is inspired by a dream I had about a massive engine in the middle of a desert. This engine was made of shiny metals with strange fleshlike textures. I knew that it transformed the sun's energy to extreme emotions. That was the only way that the engine would not break.

Bethan Morgan-Williams – Gêmdisyn, for E flat clarinet

The word 'Gêmdis' combines the Welsh words for 'game' and 'dice'. Morgan-Williams's Gêmdis was composed in 2020 for Carl Rosman and Musikfabrik. Gêmdisyn– the suffix -yn designating in Welsh a singular thing found in the natural world – is based on the solo E-flat clarinet part of that piece. It is more like a new piece made from recycled materials than a mere extraction, however: sections have been reordered, reshaped and in some cases discarded entirely. While Gêmdis took several rolls through different emotional states, Gêmdisyn alternates between just two: a whimsical, skipping chatter, like a child talking to itself, and a fiery, flashing loss of control. A new central section of fragile harmonics and deliberately audible leaks of air – ironically marked 'mechanical' – breaks the pattern and despite its delicacy adds a degree of certainty to the random shakes of the dice. As the game comes to its end and the different temperaments depart, it is this atmosphere that remains.

-Tim Rutherford-Johnson

Einar Torfi Einarson – Other proportions: rough path by extinction (virgula ligatura), for saxophone and piano

Other proportions: rough path by extinction (virgula ligatura) was written for ELISION ensemble in 2022, more specifically for Joshua Hyde (saxophone) and Alex Waite (piano). The piece grew out of experiments with durational values and metric relationships but while that remains an active substratum within the piece it also explores elements of immobility, hesitation, intensive silence, negative dynamics, layers of physical action, and different communicational

spaces. The piece is also notationally explorative and employs different types of notation to engage performers in different ways, and to explore different meanings of lines, curves, virgules, ligatures, so as to open up other interpretive dimensions. In this sense the “rough path” (from the title) relates to these graphical worlds which are trapped within different categories of notational spaces which can also be seen – if we extend the metaphor – as having the presence of an extinct (life) form, or rather the durability of something that is on the threshold of extinction with all the separation and supreme isolation that accompanies such (imagined or real) position.

Evan Johnson – *contemptus mundi*, for clarinet in C and piano

Different geometries of ekstasis: a constantly shifting but always uncontrollable violence. Nothing settles in this relatively short piece: it is a constant stumbling forward from pressure to pressure, sometimes inward and down, sometimes upward and out; against silence or against lungs or against keys or against resolution or against passing time; but the surface is always unstable and the compulsion towards perforating impulse is irresistible. This piece is about pressures. Laying atop the surface like an obscuring layer of dust are flaking fragments from the fourth-century *Apophthegmata Patrum* ("Sayings of the Desert Fathers"):

Ἔλεγον περὶ τοῦ ἀββᾶ Ἑλαδίου, ὅτι ἐποίησεν εἴκοσι ἔτη εἰς τὰ Κελλία, καὶ οὐκ ἤρε ποτε τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἄνω, ἰδεῖν τὴν στέγην τῆς ἐκκλησίας.

"It was said of abba Helladius that he lived for twenty years at Kellia and never once raised his eyes to look at the roof of the church."

Dominik Karski – *Streamforms VI (Nocturnal)*, for solo piano

Streamforms VI (Nocturnal) is the latest instalment in a series that began 20 years ago with the bass flute solo *Streamforms*. In the piano solo, the title extension, (*Nocturnal*), is intended as a somewhat misleading reference to the classical tradition. Instead of the familiar gentle mood of Romantic nocturnes, this is a thick and often loud mass of densely entangled sound streams; as if the entire piano is resonating all the time, but with particular constellations of pitches highlighted during the process. In developing this type of idea, I was inspired by

an imagined picture of ancient Indigenous Australians observing the densely lit night sky, unpolluted by electric light. I had this picture in mind when reading research papers on Indigenous science and astronomy and learning how Aboriginal Australians were reading the night sky and building ecological and seasonal knowledge by identifying indicators in the constellations of what occurs on the land. This means that the border, or distinction, between the celestial and the terrestrial is very much blurred, if it exists at all; the idea of being “down below” while at the same time being immersed in the “up above”. In my work, I was therefore looking for an immersive experience that would bring a vast sonic night, descending with all its dark heaviness and bright mystery.

Anne Cleare – luna (the eye that opens the other eye), for alto saxophone

This piece has a lot to do with eyes. The saxophone should be thought of as a dragonfly with eyes so big they cover almost its entire head, giving it a helmeted appearance and a full 360-degree field of vision. These eyes are made up of 30,000 visual units called ommatidia, each one containing a lens and a series of light-sensitive cells. It also has three smaller eyes named ocelli, which can detect movement faster than the huge compound eyes can. These ocelli quickly send visual information to the dragonfly’s motor centers, allowing it to react in a fraction of a second. Although a tiny being, its entire body is covered in powerful light detecting cells, which gradually reveal more and more powerful eyes as the piece unfolds. *Luna (the eye that opens the other eye)* is composed of solo material taken from the square of yellow light that is your window for saxophone, piano, percussion, and electric guitar, which was written for Ensemble Nickel in 2013/14.

Richard Barrett – flechtwerk, for clarinet in A and piano

The title has a double (but interconnected) reference: to “interweaving” and to the symbiotic organisms known in English as lichens (*Flechte*). *Flechtwerk* attempts to create a “symbiotic” relationship between the two parts such that each is required to complete the other. If the fungal and algal components of a lichen are separated from one another in a centrifuge, they continue to grow but as amorphous white or green masses respectively, as opposed to the considerable amount of structure displayed by the natural state. The two

organisms are intertwined to the extent of widespread DNA exchange taking place between them. This is the kind of relationship between the instruments, which I envisaged for *Flechtwerk*. Accordingly, unisons and heterophony between the clarinet and piano dominate the musical textures - the piano part stays for long periods within the pitch-range of the clarinet, and often consists of a single line. Various other “symbiotic” interconnections form between the instruments: the piano’s ability to produce a continuous “flow” of sound (despite the “percussive” nature of the elements of this flow), using the sustaining pedal, is paralleled by the extensive use of circular breathing in the clarinet part so as to produce another kind of continuousness (despite the discontinuous nature of breathing). At other points the clarinet plays two-part counterpoint in multiphonics. Thus both instruments frequently lose their individual characteristics in order to contribute to a new composite “organism”. Most of the unusual clarinet techniques employed in *Flechtwerk* were suggested by Carl Rosman, while the clarinet's single extended solopassage is a homage to the soprano saxophone playing of Evan Parker.

Another aspect of the relationship between the two instruments was suggested by the ceremonial music of the Batak region of northern Sumatra, where an interwoven pair of rapid heterophonic melody-lines is played by a reed instrument and a set of five tuned drums. This music is specifically alluded to about four minutes into *Flechtwerk*.

Biographies

ELISION is Australia’s premier new music ensemble. The ensemble is distinguished by a long-term engagement with complex and challenging aesthetics and a fascination for an artisanal and intimately gestural approach to the creation and performance of music. ELISION has toured to twenty-two countries and performed at venues such as the Hebbel Theater Berlin, the Berlin Philharmonie, Saitama Arts Theatre Tokyo, Pompidou Centre, the National Concert hall of Taiwan, and Vienna Konzerthaus; and at festivals such as Wien Modern, Maerzmusik, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Festival Ars Musica of Brussels, Züricher TheaterSpektakel, the 50th Warsaw Autumn Festival, Ultima Oslo, TRANSIT Festival Leuven, Spitalfields London, the Chekov International Theatre Festival of Moscow, the Shanghai New Music Week,

Festival Vértice of Mexico, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane Festivals and Festival d'Automne à Paris. The group's discography extends to over twenty-four compact discs including recordings made at the Deutschlandfunk, Radio Bremen and BBC London Studios for release on KAIROS, HCR, NMC, NEOS and MODE, reviewed to acclaim in Gramophone, The Wire, New York Times and BBC Music Magazine.

Joshua Hyde is a saxophonist, improviser & composer. Internationally recognised as a leading performer of new music, saxophonist and founding member of Parisian new music ensemble soundinitiative, half of scapegoat duo with Canadian percussionist Noam Bierstone and member of Australia's leading new music ensemble ELISION, he is also a regular guest with ensembles across Europe including Klangforum Wien, Musikfabrik, Ensemble Nadar, and Ensemble Intercontemporain.

Joshua's discography includes releases on Kairos, Integrated Records, NMC, HCR, Wergo and Torpor Vigil, and collaborations with some of the world's most notable composers have resulted in an extensive list of premieres. Equally at home as an improviser and producer, his most recent solo albums 'Sol' (2018), 'Distant Air' (2020) and 'How far do you have' (2021) explore ambient landscape and instrumental textures.

In 2014 Joshua was awarded a Kranichsteiner Musik Preis at the Darmstadter Ferienkurse. Previously holding teaching positions at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels (CRB) and the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts (MDW), since September 2020 Joshua is professor of saxophone & chamber music at the Geneva University of Music

Carl Rosman was born in England, grew up in Australia, and lives in Köln. He has been a member of ELISION for thirty years and of Ensemble Musikfabrik for twenty. He also appears frequently as a clarinet soloist: he was awarded a Kranichsteiner Musikpreis at the 1994 Darmstadt Ferienkurse and has enjoyed close working relationships with a wide range of composers. Works composed for him include Chris Dench's ruins within for solo clarinet in A, Liza Lim's INGUZ (fertility) for clarinet in A and cello, Rebecca Saunders's Caerulean for solo bass clarinet, Georges Aperghis's Damespiel for solo bass clarinet, Richard Barrett's

interference (for contrabass clarinetist also vocalising over a five-octave range) and Flechtwerk (for clarinet and piano, with Mark Knoop), Evan Johnson's "indolentiae ars", a medium to be kept (for historical basset clarinet in A), and Bethan Morgan-Williams's Gêmdis (for clarinet in E flat and ensemble) and Gêmdisyn (for solo clarinet in E flat).

Carl has also appeared widely as a singer, in works such as Schönberg's Pierrot lunaire, Maxwell Davies's Eight Songs for a Mad King, and Xenakis's Oresteïa, as well as more recent solo works by Georges Aperghis, Aaron Cassidy, and Evan Johnson. He has conducted ELISION, Libra Ensemble, ANAM, and Ensemble Musikfabrik at occasions such as the Adelaide Festival, hcmf, and Berlin Musikfest, in repertoire ranging from Berg's Kammerkonzert, Varèse's Ecuatorial and Boulez's le marteau sans maître to Liza Lim's How Forests Think and Enno Poppe's complete Speicher cycle.

Alexander Waite is an Australian pianist based in Germany. Alex has collaborated with such artists as Silvia Carredu, Peter Hill and Steve Davislim, and is the ELISION ensemble pianist. Appearances in Europe, Asia, the USA and Australia include Shanghai New Music Week, Metropolis, Melbourne Festival, BIFEM, National Concert Hall of Taiwan, and the Center for 21st Century Music in Buffalo; and on radio in both Australia (ABC Classic and the MBS network) and Germany (WDR). He has worked with composers including Liza Lim, Evan Johnson, Richard Barrett, Michael Maierhof, Martin Schüttler, Isabel Mundry, Cat Hope and Aaron Cassidy, who is currently composing a piano concerto for Alex, supported by the Ernst von Siemens Foundation. Alex is currently based in Stuttgart, where he is being mentored by Nicolas Hodges and is on staff at the HMDK. In 2023, Alex will also be visiting faculty for a semester at the ESML, Lisbon.

Golnaz Shariatzadeh is a composer, improviser and visual artist. She creates sonic spaces inspired by visual forms. Her music explores the unfamiliar territories of sound and is heavily influenced by film. Her works have been performed by ensembles such as Ensemble Recherche, Nadar Ensemble, TAK ensemble, Line Upon Line, ELISION and JACK Quartet amongst others. She is currently a PhD candidate in composition, studying at Harvard University with Chaya Czernowin and Hans Tutschku.

Bethan Morgan-Williams (1992-) is a composer who writes quirky, rhythmically intricate music, finding motivation in the apogee of musical performance. Described as “marvellously oblique and obscure” (5 against 4) while being “rooted in something ancient and folksy” (The Telegraph), Bethan’s music plays with expectation and variance. Ongoing preoccupations include the passing of time, the link between perception and memory, the interplay between systems and intuition, and the effects of revisiting material interactions on the substructure of ‘finished’ pieces.

Bethan enjoys the opportunity to work closely with players and considers collaboration a key part of her practice. Bethan’s music has been commissioned and/or performed by numerous established soloists including Carl Rosman (clarinet), Antoine Tamestit (viola), Colin Currie (percussion) and Ben Goldscheider (horn); and internationally acclaimed ensembles such as the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Musikfabrik, Psappha, Uproar Ensemble, New European Ensemble, Ensemble 10/10, and the London Symphony Orchestra.

Bethan has already accrued a significant number of prestigious awards including a Leverhulme Scholarship (2018-19), the Susan Bradshaw Composer Prize (RPS – 2017-18), the Christopher Brooks Composition Prize (Young Composer in Residence with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic) (2015-17), and the LSO Panufnik Scheme (2015-16). Upcoming events include a performance of Gêmdis by Riot Ensemble at MaerzMusik (Berlin) on 25 March 2023; and a performance of In the Crypt by Ben Goldscheider (horn) and Richard Uttley (live electronics) at the University of London on 28 March 2023.

Einar Torfi Einarsson (b. 1980) is an Icelandic composer whose music focuses on intensity, difference, and instability, either as sonic structure, performative challenge, or conceptual struggle. His work has been performed by ensembles such as Klangforum Wien, Ensemble intercontemporain, ELISION Ensemble, Nieuw Ensemble, Asko|Schönberg, Caput Ensemble, Iceland Symphony Orchestra and Holland Symfonia, and programmed on festivals such as Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, TRANSIT Festival, impuls festival, Dutch Music Days, Nordlichter (Berlin), Gaudeamus Music Week, Time of Music, Dark Music Days, Ung Nordisk Musik and Nordic Music Days. He is a Professor of Composition at the Iceland University of the Arts. www.einartorfieinarsson.com

Evan Johnson's music has been performed throughout North America, Europe and beyond by leading ensembles such as Musikfabrik, ELISION, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Trio Accanto, the International Contemporary Ensemble, Exaudi and many others, as well as a wide variety of international soloists. His work has been programmed at many international festivals of contemporary music, including the Lucerne Festival, Darmstadt Summer Courses, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Milano Musica, Ultraschall, Klangwerkstatt Berlin, London Contemporary Music Festival and others, featured on the Monday Evening Concert series in Los Angeles, and heard at such venues as Miller Theatre (New York) and London's Wigmore Hall. Portrait discs are available on KAIROS, all that dust, and Another Timbre; recordings of individual works are available on HCR, Metier, New Focus, Label Musikfabrik and Wergo. Selected scores are published by Edition Gravis (Berlin).

Dominik Karski is a Polish-Australian composer, whose body of work is informed by collaborations with distinct interpreters of new music. Ensembles and soloists who have worked with the composer and presented his works include ELISION Ensemble, Schallfeld Ensemble, Quatuor Diotima, Ewa Liebchen, Alessandra Rombolà, Karin Hellqvist, Anna Petrini, or Goska Isphording, among many others. His works have been presented at numerous international events, including the Polish festivals Warsaw Autumn, Musica Polonica Nova, and Musica Electronica Nova, also Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (UK), Gaudeamus Music Week (The Netherlands), Samtida Musik (Sweden), as well as the Totally Huge New Music Festival and Adelaide Festival (Australia). CDs with his works have been released by labels in Australia, Austria, Canada, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the UK, e.g. the recent release of Alessandra Rombolà's recording of the alto flute solo *The Unquenchable* (winner in the 2nd Da_sh editions International Composition Competition, Spain), or the monographic disc with the composer's flute works recorded by Ewa Liebchen and Rafal Jdrzejewski, released in 2016 by Bólt Records, Poland. In his composing, Dominik Karski focuses essentially on the player-instrument relationship as the primary source of the musical substance. Experiment and searching constitute the foundation of the music, as his main goal is to bring out innate energies and emotional charges contained within various sound qualities. The composer's selected works are published by Da_sh editions (dash-music.eu). dominikkarski.net

Ann Cleare is an Irish artist working in the areas of concert music, opera, extended sonic environments, and hybrid instrumental design. Described as “an altogether different artform’ that draws from musical traditions, but pushes against and beyond them, articulating something that is at once about sound, but that is equally concerned with energy, motion, space, and the world itself”, her work explores the static and sculptural nature of sound, probing the extremities of timbre, texture, colour, and form. She creates highly psychological and corporeal sonic spaces that encourage a listener to contemplate the complexity of the lives we exist within and “to hear the world differently”, exploring poetics of communication, transformation, and perception.

A recipient of a 2019 Ernst von Siemens Composer Prize her work has been commissioned and presented by major broadcasters such as the BBC, NPR, ORF, RTÉ, SWR, WDR for festivals such as Gaudeamus Week, The Wittenerstage für Neue Kammermusik, International Music Institute Darmstadt, Bludenzener Tage zeitgemäßer Musik, IMATRONIC Festival of Electronic Music at ZKM, MATA Festival, Taschenoperfestival, Sound Reasons Festival in India, Shanghai New Music Week, Transit Belgium, GAIDA, Totally Huge New Music in Perth, Trattorie Parma, Rainy Days in Luxembourg, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, and Ultraschall.

Richard Barrett (Swansea, 1959) is internationally active as composer and performer, and also teaches at the Institute of Sonology in Den Haag. His work encompasses a range from free improvisation to intricately notated scores, and from acoustic chamber music to innovative uses of digital technology. Current projects include a major new cycle of works, PYSCHÉ, for the ELISION Ensemble, with whom Richard Barrett has been working regularly since 1990, and for the Paris-based soundinitiative. Ongoing performative collaborations include with Paul Obermayer (FURT), Evan Parker, and several other improvising ensembles such as SKEIN (with Achim Kaufmann, Frank Gratkowski, Wilbert de Joode and others) and Colophony (with Jon Rose and Meinrad Kneer). Richard Barrett’s principal composition teacher was Peter Wiegold, and he currently resides in Belgrade. His work as composer and performer is documented on over forty CDs, including seven discs devoted to his compositions and nine by FURT. In October 2020 he set up the digital label Strange Strings together with harpist Milana Zarić. His book Music of Possibility was published by Vision Edition in 2019.

