



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS INTERNATIONAL CONCERT SERIES

Friday 5 May 2023
Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall

LSTwo

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Programme

Julius Eastman - Femenine

Interval

Mic Spencer - Message from Aiwass II

Geoff Hannan - Bubblegum

Mic Spencer - la mar allée avec le soleil

The advertised programme for tonight's concert was due to include performances of works by Malin Bång and Amit Poznansky. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, this is not possible, and we apologise for these omissions.

Programme Notes

Julius Eastman - Femenine

Billy Jennings (flute) **Izzy Hodgson** (flute) **Emily Harris** (saxophone)

Rory Lynas (trombone) **Ash Mani** (percussion) **Marcia McCants** (percussion)

Bibi Thomas (piano) **Charlie Nickels** (piano) **Flora Stinson** (violin)

Annis Archer (cello)

Julius Eastman (1940-1990) was an American composer, pianist, vocalist, and performance artist. His work is most often associated with the minimalist genre, with his works being described as minimal in form, but maximal in effect. Eastman studied composition with Constant Vaclain at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, graduating in 1963. Eastman's works gained attention once he joined Creative Artists for the Centre of the Creative and Performing Arts at the University of Buffalo in 1969. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, he composed a range of works, relying on unique configurations of instruments, multimedia, and extended improvisations.

Femenine was written towards the beginning of Eastman's compositional career and was premiered 1974. The score is presented on five hand-written pages, and poses many challenges to the performers. The score is absent of conventional measurers of time, such as time-signatures and tempo markings. The score does not indicate specific instruments, thus *Femenine* can be carved and adapted for any and every ensemble. The piece begins with sleigh bells, followed by the main motif on the vibraphone. The ensemble slowly enters, playing variations on the main motif, and thus uniquely developing the timbre of the piece.

Mic Spencer - Message from Aiwass II

Annis Archer (cello) **Ash Mani** (percussion) **Charlie Nickels** (piano)

Born in Bellshill in 1975, Spencer studied at the Universities of Glasgow and Manchester and privately with James Dillon. His music has been performed nationally and internationally, by renowned soloists and ensembles including the BBC Philharmonic, Ensemble SurPlus, Ian Pace, Elision, Apartment House, Richard Casey, Trio Atem, Adam Starkie, Carlos Cordeiro, Lauren Redhead, and lovemusic. He directs the new music ensemble LSTwo at the University of Leeds which has performed notable repertoire by composers like James Clarke, Dillon, Finnissy, Grisey, Birtwistle, Nunes, Lachenmann, Staebler, Czernowin, Gedizlioglu, Cleare, Halay, and Abondano. Recent works include *Per me si va nella città dolente* for solo piano (Ian pace), *Beatrice's Last Smile* for mobile ensemble, voice and electronics (LSTwo) and *nuthnlik disperr* for ensemble (lovemusic).

Message from Aiwass II is in 5 fragmented sections:

1. Further on these Paths
2. A Rhapsody to his Star
3. On the Alchemical Art
4. On the Way of Freedom
5. On the Unutterable Secret

Message from Aiwass II (2003) is a trio for cello, percussion and piano. The 'Message from Aiwass' series of which this is a part, takes as its starting point the written fragments of Aleister Crowley's *Liber Aleph*, a book-commentary on his *Liber Legis* and directly explores the idea of fragmentation and what that might mean in musical contexts. Here specifically, the piece takes the 'found' material of Antoine Brumel's *Haec Dies*, originally only understood to exist as a fragment

(minus the altus part) but eventually found in full in an anonymous Petrucci collection by Owain Sutton. There are a multitude of ways that the Brumel is shaped, re-shaped, transformed, often in ways that are not immediately obvious – and indeed my own musical material undergoes similar transformations simultaneously; but in one of the fragments, there is a clear reference, at least to the fragmentation of cadenzas from the original music.

Geoff Hannan - Bubblegum

Emily Harris (saxophone) **Marcia McCants** (percussion) **Gabriel Jones** (piano)

Geoff Hannan (b. 1972) is a British composer. He studied at Manchester University where he graduated in 1998, before moving to London in 2006 to complete his PhD at Royal Holloway, University of London, with Brian Lock. Along with works for chamber groups, Hannan has composed for film, including BAFTA-nominated *Take Your Partners*.

Bubblegum (2001) is a humorous piece for saxophone, piano, and percussion, but all three performers play a range of 17 musical objects, including various whistles and balloons. As irregular as this piece may sound, performers must approach *Bubblegum* with great accuracy, as time signatures and instruments are ever changing. Along with its jazz influence, Hannan draws influences for *Bubblegum* from Chick Corea's *Bessie's Blues* and Gerald Barry's *Diner*. *Bubblegum* can be described as a sonic and visual treat for the audience, from variations between atonality and brief tonal passages, to coloured balloons brightening the concert hall.

Mic Spencer - la mer allée avec le soleil

Ash Mani (percussion) **Bibi Thomas** (piano) **Flora Stinson** (violin)

la mer allée avec le soleil (2001) is a trio for violin, percussion and piano. The title comes from the opening of Georges Bataille's book *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality* and translates roughly as 'the sun matched with the sea'. These two features can be both calm and placid, or powerful and destructive, and the materials through the sections of the piece evoke these differences before eventually coming to some kind of new dialectical balance as it concludes.