

RCA Guitar Ensemble
dir. Thomas R. Moore
six to five & No(w) Guitar
production: MATRIX [New Music Centre]



TRANSIT 20-21
23.10.2021 - 11:30
LABOZAAL, STUK

PROGRAM

Dan Tramte - degradative interference LITE (2015)

Guitar and video - 5'

Pieter-Jan Vercammen

Degradative Interference LITE is modelled after the experience of scrolling through Instagram feeds, casually stopping to view a short repeating video for a while, and scrolling onward. As we effortlessly browse, we witness the hyperactive noise of the web, encapsulated by energetic rhythm of the video and the performer's actions.

This composition is part of the score anthology for young musicians No(w) Guitar, published by MATRIX & Nico Couck (2016).

Ida Lundén - dadodado (2003)

Guitar - 2'30"

Philip Brodzinski

"I composed **dadodado** with the guitar in my hands, inspired by the robust qualities of the instrument. The guitar is a stringed instrument that you are free to detune and alter with preparations, opposed to for instance the violin, and the piece is based on just that: five of the six strings are detuned and a tin can is held in the left hand. I wanted to find a sort of anti-virtuosity, a more rudimentary way of playing. As if anybody could play the piece if you just had an open and listening mind. The piece was written for a student collaboration at the Royal College of Music, Stockholm in 2003 and has since then been played by guitarists all over the world and also been recorded on CD and broadcasted on radio."

This composition is part of the score anthology for young musicians No(w) Guitar, published by MATRIX & Nico Couck (2016).

Lois V Vierk - Go Guitars (1981)

Five electric guitars - 12'

Bert Koether, Arne Torfs, Cézanne Van de Voorde, Emma Wills, Emma Zoons

"This piece is for 5 electric guitars. The symbol means five, and is pronounced 'go' in Japanese. Guitars strings are all tuned to E and microtonal variants of E. I think of the 5 guitars as acting together to form one massive instrument. Go Guitars is concerned with sound, with expression, and with musical structure. It begins with relatively simple musical materials - strums, repeated pitches, and pulled string glissandi. These sounds are continuously developed in slow unfolding patterns. The sounds and phrases become more complex, finally developing into dynamic slide glissandi on all 6 strings, covering the entire range of

the instrument. This work utilizes principles of what I call 'exponential structure', in which time and rates of change of musical materials are governed by application of exponential factors. The piece builds in intensity, moving from a high volume opening to a frenzied finale. I composed Go Guitars in Los Angeles in 1981 for John Schneider."

Jessie Marino – **six to five** (2021)

20 moving acoustic guitarists, 1 conductor – 13'

RCA Guitar Ensemble: Philip Brodzinski, Anri Erikanov, Yenthe Geudens, Liam Gyselinck, Milos Hadzic, Nicolas Houben, Bert Koether, Roberto Marina Montero, Astrid Mertens, Andoni Pedone, Alejandro Tentor Viñas, Arne Torfs, Cézanne Van de Voorde, Jonas Van Os, Wannes Van Rijkelen, Pieter-Jan Vercammen, Robbe Vertente, Gitte Willekens, Emma Wills, Emma Zoons

Thomas R. Moore, conductor

six to five employs marching strategies in order to perform audio mixing live, using human performers and their bodies-in-space as a substitute for the digital and technological tools typically deployed to create real-time stereo or surround sound. Like the entrancing patterns of marathon runners' legs and parading bands, it clearly draws on an American style of minimalism with glacial movements in sonic material mixed in with sudden shifts in visual and audible patterns. 20 guitarists take to the floor, moving sometimes in unison and creating formations of circles, lines and squares. They are directed by a conductor who sometimes follows and sometimes chases them about the space. Marino's playbook, in short, does all of us faders make.

Commissioned by Thomas R. Moore

Co-produced by MATRIX [New Music Centre] & the RCA Guitar Ensemble

Premiered on 3 May 2021 at the ARIA Seminar: Framing the Normal

Interview with Jessie Marino

by Ann Eysermans, October 2021

Reading this introduction, I wonder what your starting point was for this work. Is there a particular idea that forms the basis for this creation?

I thought about this piece first, in terms of scale. We have 20 of the same instrument - and this is something major to confront! My mind went almost immediately to the idea of a marching band because while the individual parts might be small or minimal, they all contribute equally to the totality of the shapes and sounds the audience experience as a whole.

Human movement as a substitute for digital tools, why do you choose this approach? Do you consider this way of thinking as a (personal) critique or comment on the digital world, or is it (rather merely) an idea that you wanted to develop?

I am not a huge fan of sitting in front of the computer - so anytime there is an opportunity to make

something in the 'analog' world, I try to take it!

But I wouldn't say it's a critique of the digital world - the effects I wanted to use would be extremely easy to pull off in a Digital Audio Workspace, but to perform spatial panning using 20 people is an extremely laborious and inefficient way of performing this same effect!! The translation from a rather simple effect in the digital world to a burdensome task on this physical plane raises some interesting questions for me.

The movements (of marathon runners, parading bands, glacial movements) that follow circles, lines and squares, do they have a specific meaning in your work?

There are no mystical meanings to the circles, lines squares etc... I just studied a bunch of marching band formations and tried to figure out ways to use these formations to produce the desired sonic effect.

How do you describe the role of the conductor - who is in charge of the whole, but sometimes also follows musicians through the space? The conductor as a re-contextualised conductor?

Thomas and I spoke a lot about this role. Frankly, I've very rarely worked with a conductor- and when Thomas first asked me about it I was rather hesitant to look for a new definition. For me a conductor is another rehearsal tool and the music I make doesn't really require a conductor. But I thought more about the idea of the conductor (particularly in an orchestral format) as a real time mixer/sculptor of sound. So I simply took this idea and filtered it through my own aesthetic concepts of sound, body and space.

Biographies



Jessie Marino is a composer, performer, and media artist. Her pieces score out sound, video, gesture, lighting, and staging, treating each of these elements as expandable musical materials.

Jessie is a recipient of the 2020 Fromm Composition Prize from Harvard University. In 2018, she received the Rome Prize in music composition from the American Academy in Rome. She has recently been commissioned by Ultima Festival (NO), Darmstadt International Summer Course (DE), Borealis Festival (NO), Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (UK), and Transit Festival (BE). Her work has made recent appearances at the BAM! Festival for MusikTheater (Berlin), Festival Musica (Strasbourg), Heroines of Sound (Berlin/MX), LA Chamber Orchestra Contemporary Series and her pieces have been performed by formidable new music ensembles such as Speak Percussion (AU), KNM Ensemble (DE), SCENATET

(DK), SoundInitiative (FR), We Spoke Percussion (UK), Ensemble Adapter (DE), Die Ordnung Der Dinge (DE), and Ensemble Pamplemousse (USA). Marino studied composition at Wesleyan University with Alvin Lucier and Ronald Kuivila and she earned a DMA in musical composition from Stanford University, working with sound artist Paul DeMarinis. Since 2019 she has made Berlin her home town.

The RCA Guitar Ensemble consists of a variable line-up of all Bachelor and Master guitar students of the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp. In 2019 they performed the premiere of Michael Maierhof's Zonen 6 for 17 guitars at deSingel, Antwerp. Later, in 2020, this performance took them to the 15th edition of Klub Katarakt in Hamburg. Since 2020, they have also been working with Lois Vierk's Go Guitars - all too often performed by soloist and audio - to bring about the original intention of a live performance.

Thomas R. Moore graduated from Indiana University in 2002 before relocating to Europe. There he attended the Utrecht School of the Arts (NL), gaining his second Bachelor of Music degree (2003) in trombone performance before earning his Master's degree (2006) from the Royal Conservatoire in Antwerp.

Thomas now devotes his time to conducting and playing trombone in a variety of genres. He is conductor and trombonist with Nadar Ensemble, a member of the orchestra at Theater des Westens in Berlin, and a regular guest with ChampdAction, Spectra Ensemble and Ictus Ensemble. As a soloist, he has premiered works at several international festivals including the ISCM World Music Days, Arte No Tempo, Darmstadt New Music Summer Course, Porto Franko, //hcmf, ZXZW, Time of Music and Images Sonores. Moore has also regularly conducted the Orchestra of the Royal Dutch Air Force, was the assistant musical director at Les Misérables and musical director at the hit Dutch musical, Soldaat van Oranje.

In 2018, Moore began a doctorate at the University and Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp in an attempt to "redefine the role of the conductor in new music," researching the artistic and socio-economic motivations behind the utilization of conductors.



Described by The New York Times as agile, compelling and irresistible, Antwerp-based guitarist **Nico Couck** (b. 1988) started playing the instrument at age 15. In 2013 he obtained his Master's degree at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp, under the guidance of Professor Roland Broux. In addition to concerts in Europe, Asia, Central America, and the U.S., past events and venues include Acht Brücken Köln, Barbican Centre, Cité de la Musique Paris, Festival Internacional Cervantino,

Huddersfield Music Festival, Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik Darmstadt, MaerzMusik Berlin, Nationaltheater Mannheim, NUNCI Chicago, Transit Festival, Vlaamse Opera, Warschau

Autumn, Wien Modern, Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik, and others.

He has collaborated with and premiered works by Oscar Bianchi, Chaya Czernowin, Jason Eckardt, Clemens Gadenstätter, Johannes Kreidler, Brigitta Muntendorf, Hilda Paredes, Stefan Prins, Eva Reiter, Simon Steen-Andersen, Steven Takasugi, amongst several others. Conductors he collaborated with include Alain Altinoglu, Yuri Bashmet, Georges-Elie Octors, Titus Engel, Michel Tabachnik, and Claudio Vandelli. At the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp, Couck is assistant-professor to Roland Broux, teaches chamber music and electric guitar, and directs the guitar ensemble.

Music is by definition a human means of expression, which manifests itself in the 'now'. That is exactly where MATRIX [New Music Centre] wants to be: MATRIX keeps a finger on the pulse of the contemporary music scene. Just like the culture and ecosystem we live in, this musical scene is in constant motion. And we are moving along!

Being passionate collectors and researchers, we map out existing tendencies and reflect on the meaning of music as a contemporary form of art. Our activities as a library and documentation centre have been awarded 'Best for Classical Music' by THE WORD. Rooted in the awareness that the compositions of today can turn into endangered heritage tomorrow, we pursue a proactive

heritage policy. We consider the challenges of conservation and stock-taking, while continuing to develop projects that make our collection available to an audience as wide as possible.

Being explorers and inventors, we are constantly scouting the great potential that contemporary music has to offer for music education. Music teachers, schools, musicians, concert and festival organizations and the public can rely on MATRIX in their quest for information and educational guidance. MATRIX wants to contribute to a cultural awareness that helps to overcome prejudices against the 'other' and reticence about the unknown.

Each year, MATRIX puts together a concert with non- and/or pre-professional musicians for Transit Festival.

MATRIX is supported by the Flemish Government, the City of Leuven and the University of Leuven.



www.matrix-new-music.be

