

4-7-2013

Senior Recital: Benjamin Montgomery, composition

Benjamin Montgomery

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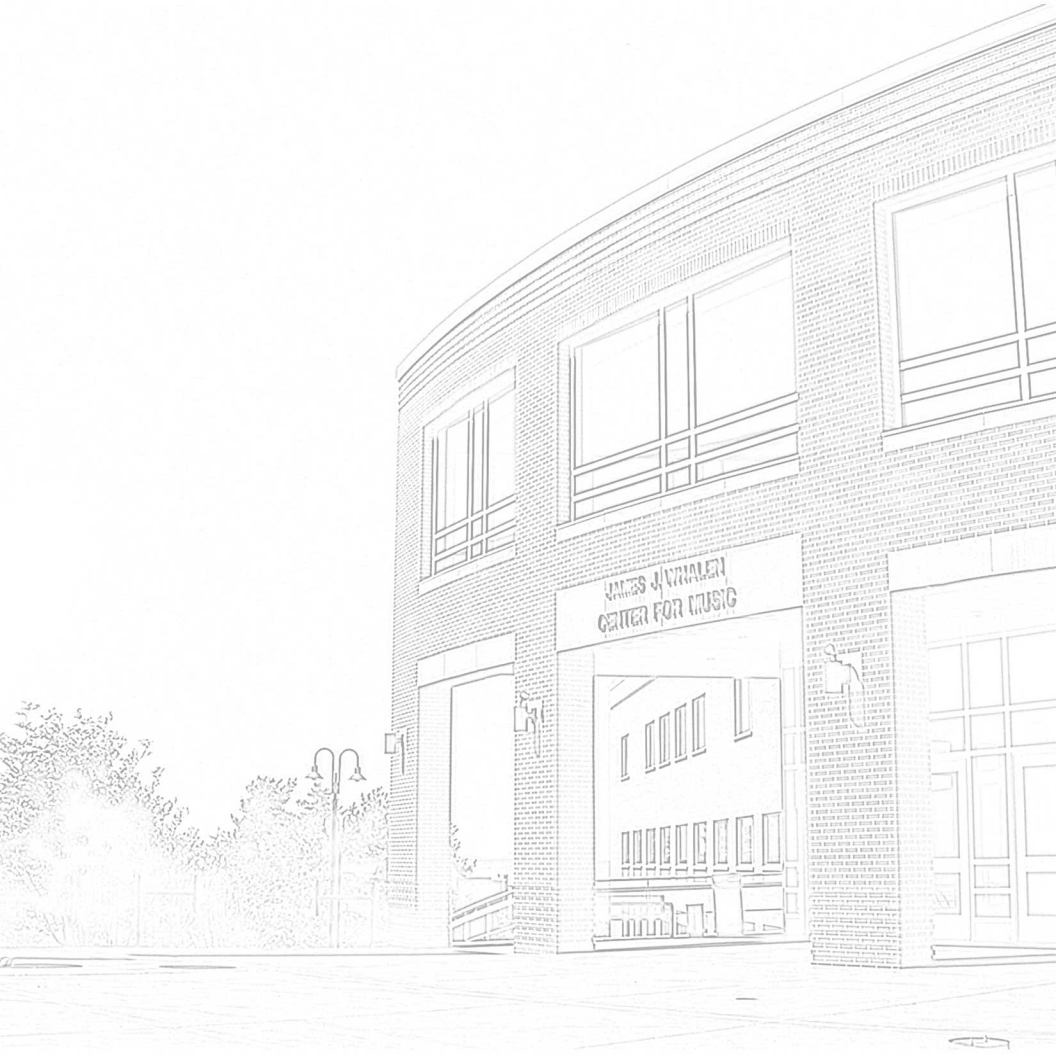
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Senior Recital: Benjamin Montgomery, composition

Ford Hall
Sunday April 7th, 2013
3:00 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Dilation
Movement II

Ossic Saxophone Quartet:
Junwen Jia, soprano saxophone
Benjamin Montgomery, alto saxophone
Gregory Sisco, tenor saxophone
Alexander Judge, baritone saxophone

Poetics

text: A. R. Ammons

Poetics Chorus
Benjamin Montgomery, conductor

Synergy

Richard Rose, alto saxophone / interactive electronics

Pitch Black

- I. Restriction, Isolation
- II. Absence, Disorientation
- III. Fear, Imagination, Adrenaline
- IV. Acceptance, Reliance

Half Brassed Five:
Samuel Thurston, trumpet I
Thomas Pang, trumpet II
Robert Oldroyd, french horn
Joshua Zimmer, trombone
William Conners, tuba

Intermission

Deconstruction

Sean Gerard Cotty, piano
Deconstruction Orchestra
Patrick Valentino, conductor

This recital is in fulfillment of the degree Bachelor of Music in Composition.
Benjamin Montgomery is from the studio of Dana Wilson.

Program Notes

Dilation Mvt. II

Dilation focuses on the concept of expansion and contraction. This is represented in the treatment of meter, which fluxuates almost constantly. While the first and third movements have a perpetual pulse, the second has less consistent patterns and a more free nature. Gestures flow from one to another, creating small expansions within phrases. The dilating effect can also be heard in the shape of the piece which is a large arch: beginning very subtly, growing to the climactic theme, and then fading out in a similar manor as it opened.

Poetics

I look for the way
things will turn
out spiraling from a center,
the shape
things will take to come forth
in

so that the birch tree white
touched black at the branches
will stand out
wind-glittering
totally its apparent self:

I look for the forms
things want to come as

from what black wells of
possibility
how a thing will
unfold:

not the shape on paper --
though
that, too -- but the
uninterfering means on paper:

not so much looking for the
shape
as being available
to any shape that may be
summoning itself
through me
from the self not mine but
ours.

- A. R. Ammons

Synergy

Synergy refers to the juxtaposition of both an acoustical instrument and the electronics through which the instrument's sound is manipulated, as well as the concept behind the musical material.

The electronics were created in MAX/MSP, an object-based programming language. An Ipad is attached to the bell of the saxophone and the accelerometer in the Ipad measures the motions of the performer. The program receives this information and alters different aspects of the sound. It begins in a slow, introspective world and is then contrasted with a faster, almost dance like section. These two are brought together in the culmination, the synergy of ideas.

Pitch Black

The inspiration for this piece was the idea of being in complete darkness, lost in a cave, and the piece describes the emotions one would experience if left in that state permanently.

The first movement deals with the loss of sight and the restrictions that result. Without any visual frame of reference, a sense of severe isolation sets in on us. The second movement focuses on the disorientating effects of our scenario. We do not know where walls or obstacles lie in our path, and balance is thrown off as our eyes vainly try to focus. Then, in the third movement, we attempt to create a mental image of our surroundings, only to find that our imagination has filled that void with our fears, and we struggle to discern what is real. Terrors seem to swoop out of the darkness towards us. Our adrenaline begins to rise in response and we grow frantic. After awhile, our heart rate begins to slow, and we breathe more deeply, trying to control our mind. Our hearing and other senses grow stronger as we begin to rely on them more. In the fourth movement we find new ways to approach and ultimately understand the darkness. We start to accept that it exists.

This piece is not about victoriously escaping from the darkness, but rather learning to live in it. It focuses on when we are powerless to change an unfortunate situation, and the only way to proceed is to grow in understanding and self control as we cope with the darkness.

Deconstruction

The concerto is a reflection of my own process of composing, and how my conceptualization of a piece changes throughout its creation. The material consists of three sections, representing general phases of my conscious development. These sections are separated by an interlude, reinterpreted each time, which also opens the piece.

The first phase of my compositional process is one in which many ideas float through my mind, and different possible interpretations and directions are considered. The material is very disorganized and in a rather chaotic state while I write different gestures as they come to me, to be revisited later. This is represented in the first section of the piece, through its very dense, loud, and complex nature, within a very simple A-B-A form.

During the second phase, I slow my thoughts enough to set a controlled direction and structure for the entirety of the piece. There are small successes and failures while I progress through this phase. This is represented in the second section while I search for mental clarity, analyze the material I have created, trying to look at everything in a completely different way. I limit myself to one idea and develop it more in depth through theme and variation form. It uses the same harmonic concepts as the first, applied in different, extended ways and treated with more freedom. Attempting to create a contrast with the first section's density results in a slow, introspective, and spacious effect, focusing more on different colors throughout the orchestra as well as the range of the piano.

The third phase is bittersweet. As the piece becomes focused, it also becomes clear what material is vital and what is unnecessary. Realizing that I need to delete fragments to preserve the integrity of the piece causes frustration and as I write, the irrelevant material is always in the back on my head. I have to fight back the old tendencies to use too much material. This is portrayed in the mood of the third section, which is in classical sonata form (thought to characterize balance and sophistication) and primarily develops material from the first section in new ways. Through this, I try to reference a "higher" sense of purpose for the piece. Nearing its completion, I realized I could spend a lifetime making minor changes of little significance to a piece of this length; the only way to complete it is for me to conceptualize it as a finished product. The piece ends with a large chord as the orchestra stops and the piano holds through. The sustained piano chord represents my acceptance, of and coming to peace with, my creation.

Poetics Chorus

Soprano

Rachel Mikol
Kathleen Wallace
Shelley Attadgie
Lauren Smith

Alto

Mollie Hamilton
Taylor Eike
Katrina Kuka
Ryan Kennedy

Tenor

Thomas Riley
Peter Blanford
Kevin Fortin
Miguel Torres

Bass

Travis Pilsits
Michael Roddy
Jeremy Pletter
Justin Parish

Deconstruction Orchestra

Violin I

Joohyun Lee
Ryann Aery
Claire Wilcox
Jenna Jordan

Violin II

Jason Kim
Marcus Hogan
Emilie Benigno
Kathleen Wallace

Viola

Carly Rockenhauser
Austin Savage
Jonathan Fleischman
Kelly Sadwin

Cello

David Fenwick
Sean Swartz

Bass

Andrew Ryan
Lindsey Orcutt

Piccolo

Sarah Peskanov

Flute

Sophia Ennocenti

Oboe

Candice Crawford
Jacob Walsh

Clarinet

Kelsey Paquin
Justine Call

Bassoon

Stanley Howard
Marissa D'Ambrosio

Horn

Emma Staudacher
M. Jacob Factor
Aubrey Landsfeld
William Larch

Trumpet

Samuel Thurston
Aaron Scoccia

Trombone

Joshua Zimmer
Justin Oswald

Percussion

Jessica Linden

Timpani

Keegan Sheehy