



Press Release – For Immediate Release

Johannesburg, 19 September 2022

Current electronic music from South Africa in concert

[NewMusicSA](#), North-West University's School of Music and MASARA Research Entity present a triple electronic music concert at three NWU campuses. The programme includes a selection of current South African electronic music by NWU and NewMusicSA composers: Cara Stacey and Chris van Rhyn representing NWU School of Music, and Malcolm Dedman, Lukas Ligeti and Playgroup selected by NewMusicSA following a call for works. The concerts are at 13:00 on the Vanderbijlpark campus on Tuesday 20th September, at 18:30 on the same day in Potchefstroom, and again at 13:00 on the Mahikeng campus on Wednesday 21st September. The program will be streamed online through NWU and NewMusicSA's social media platforms.

Cara Stacey - *Casing / Soft walls, soft wood / Wildness Gone*

Cara Stacey is a South African musician, composer and musicologist and the Standard Bank Young Artist for Music 2021. She is a pianist and plays southern African musical bows (umrhubhe, uhadi, makhoyane). She holds a doctorate in African music, specifically looking at the makhoyane musical bow from eSwatini (University of Cape Town/SOAS), has released four albums to date drawing on her collaborations with musicians across the globe, and is a Senior Lecturer in African Music at North-West University.

Casing is an exploration of piano textures. Drawing on her explorations of soft and hard architectures in sound, Stacey created this work as an open investigation into different sounds and structures on the piano. As a substantial technology, the piano is responsible for maintaining hegemonic learning and performative judgements but also subverts this by emitting the softest tones and buzzes. Casing explores this duality with pre-recorded sounds, found sound and samples. Soft walls, soft wood again examines soft architecture in composition but from the perspective of method. In this work, Stacey pushes composer-performer boundaries by building a piece from improvisations and pre-composed melodic fragments with cellist Nicola du Toit. Inspired by archetypal mbira dza vadzimu compositions from Zimbabwe, this work is built from the acoustic, amplified, effected and transformed sounds of the cello. Wildness Gone was written for the multi-disciplinary trio The Texture of Silence formed of jazz guitarist Keenan Ahrends, visual artist Mzwandile Buthelezi and multi-instrumentalist Cara Stacey. This work features voice, the Uganda lamellophone budongo and guitar. The visual work accompanying the music is created by Mzwandile Buthelezi.

Chris van Rhyn - *Al Ghuraifa 1: Mosque*

Chris holds the degrees BMus, BMus (Honours), MMus and PhD from Stellenbosch University, where he studied composition with Roelof Temmingh and Hans Roosenschoon. He is an Associate Professor at the School of Music, North-West University and is Director of the research entity MASARA. Specialised in writing for smaller ensembles and electronic music, Chris's compositions have been performed locally and abroad.

Al Ghuraifa 1: Mosque is the first of several soundscapes composed for the project of Chris and photographer Moya Goosen titled *Mythmaking: Visualising Sound Traces/Sounding Visual Traces*. Chris description is as follows: "The muezzin walks up the minaret to make a call to prayer. You hear the wind blow and the soft clanging of the metal fence outside the mosque. The walking and calls-to-prayer tracks appear in five layers, symbolising the five calls to prayer and the pillars of Islam. The footsteps of men approaching the mosque are heard; they push past thorny bushes, enter the yard, and perform the cleansing ritual called Wudu. In the next section, I am a cultural tourist, standing outside the sahn (or courtyard), listening to distorted prayers. I don't understand the prayers and hear them with my Western, Judeo-Christian ears. The wind blows stronger, and the clanging of the metal fence is louder as the village becomes less inhabitable. The prayers stop suddenly, and all that remains is the wind."

Lukas Ligeti - *Smoke Signals from LaLaLand*

Lukas Ligeti is a composer, percussionist, electronics performer, and Extraordinary Professor at University of Pretoria. The recipient of the 2010 CalArts Alpert Award in Music, he has been commissioned by Bang On A Can, Kronos Quartet, Eighth Blackbird, American Composers Orchestra, Ensemble Modern, and others, and has performed with John Zorn, Gary Lucas, Marilyn Crispell, etc., as well as giving solo concerts on 4 continents. He co-founded the groups Beta Foly and Burkina Electric and has worked with traditional musicians across the continent.

*This work was composed in 2012 for "ETN*O", a LP of De Player, an organization active in the musical underground of Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Combining the melodic and the industrial, it evokes an atmosphere both festive and sinister, party music for a decadent society unaware of, and unwilling to realize, what perils it is facing. But: might there be a more peaceful and joyful rebirth waiting after inevitable, impending destruction?*

Malcolm Deadman - *Divine Mysteries*

A number of diverse influences have helped shape the musical language of Malcolm Dedman (born in London in 1948 but resident in provincial South Africa since 2007), among them Bartók and Messiaen, his Bahá'í Faith and, more recently, his new South African homeland. Points of contact with other composers can be heard, too, not least Debussy, Ravel, Barber and Ginastera.

*Divine Mysteries is one of several pieces I conceived in the 1990's for an electronic keyboard, using a multi-track sequencer. It is one of the tracks on Dedman's album *Visions of the Unseen*. There are three major layers to this music: firstly, electronic gongs and percussion; secondly, a simple melodic phrase whose rhythm is enhanced by percussion and, thirdly, a choral using electronic voice sounds. The first two represent the new Dispensation whereas the choral indicates that all that is new is a progressive continuation of the old Dispensation. These layers are developed and move us to climactic moments, the third moment being especially powerful. It is intended that the music sounds mysterious and may at first seem strange. The listener is encouraged to absorb the energy of this piece so that its mysteries may be revealed.*

Playgroup (Jill Richards, Jurgen Meekel and BJ Engelbrecht) - *Untitled*

Playgroup is an artistic collective which consists of Jill Richards, Jurgen Meekel and BJ Engelbrecht. Jill Richards is a South African pianist specialising in late 20th and 21st century music. Versatile and



dynamic, her interests range from Bach to free improvisation to interdisciplinary work. A Steinway Artist, Jill has released six CDs, including 'Etudes' in 2022. Jurgen Meekel is a multimedia artist who works and collaborates on contemporary art installation pieces, sculptures, animation, motion graphics, sound, film and video work that he exhibits nationally and internationally. His work has been acquired by the Central Museum of Modern Art in Utrecht. He currently teaches filmmaking at the Wits School of the Arts in Film & TV in Johannesburg. Dr Barend Engelbrecht is a Johannesburg-based artist and researcher whose main creative and theoretical interest is in sound and its relationship to time and space, particularly within the dynamic urban environment of Johannesburg. His current research provides an auditory perspective on the relationship between urban design and the cultural ecology of the city.

These pieces are based on field recordings we made in a light industrial workshop in inner-city Johannesburg, which (surprisingly) had trees and birds on the premises. We then added to the files with prepared piano and some small percussion.

Events Listing

Vanderbijlpark – NWU Campus (Books & Beans, Learning & Research Commons Building)

Tuesday 20 September – 13.00h – Free entry

Address: 1174 Hendrick Van Eck Boulevard, Vanderbijlpark, 1900

Facebook event & streaming link: www.facebook.com/events/909908870389430

Potchefstroom – NWU Conservatory (PC-K1)

Tuesday 20 September – 18.30h – Free entry

Address: corner of Thabo Mbeki Way & Meyer Street, Potchefstroom, 2531

Facebook event & streaming link: www.facebook.com/events/523162633144954

Mahikeng – NWU Mahikeng Campus (Building MC-A1, Room 261)

Wednesday 21 September – 13.00h – Free entry

Address: Corner of Dr. Albert Luthuli and University Drive, Mmabatho, 2745

Facebook event & streaming link: www.facebook.com/events/474192821278012

Artists Links

Cara Stacey: www.carastacey.com / <https://textureofsilence.com>

Chris van Rhyn: www.humanities.nwu.ac.za/music/chris-van-rhyn

Lukas Ligeti: www.lukasligeti.com

Malcolm Dedman: www.malcolmdedman.com

Jill Richards: www.jillrichards.com

Jurgen Meekel: www.jurgenmeekels.blogspot.com

BJ Englebrecht: www.bjengelbrecht.com

NewMusicSA Links

Website: www.newmusicza.org.za

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NewMusicSA

YouTube: <https://rb.gy/ba12yn>

Twitter: www.twitter.com/NewMusicSA



Hashtags: #NewMusicSA #DigitalIndaba22 #ConcertSeries

– Ends –

Notes for the Editor

NewMusicSA is a non-profit arts advocacy organisation that promotes the creation, performance, and enjoyment of South African new music. Founded in 1999 and operating formally since 2003, NewMusicSA is the South African section (and current only African section) of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM). NewMusicSA is supported by the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust and the Rupert Music Foundation. For more information please visit our website www.newmusic.org.za, follow @NewMusicSA on Twitter at www.twitter.com/NewMusicSA or like @NewMusicSA on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NewMusicSA.

Graphics (Hi-Res Pictures & Artwork)

Dropbox link: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/jsm84nhq8gz92rw/AAD2CV-sEd0_T9OgZk-05v_a?dl=0

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