The Princeton Laptop Orchestra
Spring 2007 Concert

CONCERT PROGRAM

Waggle Dance
Nicolas Collins

PLOrking in the Prairie
PLOrkit!
Scott Elmegreen & John Fontein

Fabrics
Scott Smallwood

Maybe the Monolith will just calm down
Anne Hege

---INTERMISSION---

...to shining sea
Alan Tormey

TBA
Ge Wang

Favorite Things or Titre français avec un petit Mondrian
Sam Pluta

The Spring 2007 Princeton Laptop Orchestra is:

Julia Brav | Steve Chen | Perry R. Cook | Paul Cowgill | Peter Dougherty |
Matt Hoffman | Spencer Salazar | Scott Smallwood | Brandon Szeto
Alan Tormey | John Travis | Ge Wang | Wei Xiang


Saturday, May 19, 2007.
Taplin Auditorium. Princeton University.
Princeton, NJ
Waggle Dance

Nicolas Collins

_Waggle Dance_ relies on two sets of sounds: firstly feedback between each laptop's built-in mike and its speakers, and secondly intimate texts written and recorded by the member of the orchestra. Only the edges of these sounds, however, are heard as each laptop runs a program that, like a nervous conversationalist in the principal's office, makes noise through a awkwardly belated attempt to self-edit (this process emulates a venerable analog signal processing device known as a "Ducker"). Every time a computer starts to say something, it shuts itself up, but always a moment too late. The cat is never let out of the bag, but we can hear its whiskers twitching.

PLOrking in the Prairie - 2 guys. 1 room. No sleep.
PLOrkit! - Our favorite childhood game gone terribly wrong.

Scott Elmegreen & John Fontein

Fabrics

Scott Smallwood

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Maybe the Monolith will just calm down

Music by Anne Hege
Text by Colleen Plimier
Software design by Spencer Salazar
Vocalist - Anne Hege

"For hundreds of thousands of years, mankind lived without a straight line in nature. Objects in this world resonated with each other. For the caveman, the mountain Greek, the Indian hunter (indeed, even for the latter-day Manchu Chinese), the world was multicentered and reverberating. It was gyroscopic. Life was like being inside a sphere, 360 degrees without margins...Here we have a clue to the mentality of the pre-literate, that world of oral tradition that we eventually left behind about the end of the Hellenic period. It is the mentality of the multitude, or as Yeats put it: everything happening at once, in a state of constant flux."


...to shining sea

Alan Tormey

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COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

Nicolas Collins is currently a Visiting Fellow in the Department of Music. His first laptop was a 1977 Synertek Vim, with 1K of memory. His recent book, Handmade Electronic Music - The Art of Hardware Hacking, on the other hand, is a guide to the joys of analog.

Scott Elimelech hasn't slept in 3 days. He is a senior. He should not be doing this.

John Fontein hasn't slept in 4 days. He is a junior. He hates his life.

Born in Oakland, CA, Anne Hege began her musical studies singing with the Piedmont Children’s Choir and the Oakland Youth Chorus’s touring ensemble, Vocal Motion. While performing in Vocal Motion, she was highly influenced collaborations with composer/performers Linda Tillery, Keith Terry and their work with folk and world music. In 1998, Hege received her Bachelor degree from Wesleyan University with honors in music and was awarded the Gwen Livingston Pekora Prize for music composition. Hege continued her composition studies at Mills College studying with Fred Frith, Chris Brown, and Pauline Oliveros. In 2003, she received her MA in Composition and was awarded the Elizabeth Mills Crothers Prize for excellence of graduate composition in music. Hege has composed choral works for the Albany Community Chorus, Piedmont Children's Choir, Voice e Tempore, and Ninos y Jovenes Cantores de la Escuela Nacional de Musica de la DINAM. She regularly performs original works and art songs in her performance duo “SSidecar” T and in the band “New Prosthetics” and is currently studying music composition at Princeton University.

Sam Plotz is a New York City based composer of electronic, acoustic, and mixed media works. His music has been played in concerts and shown in art galleries throughout the world, by leading instrumental ensembles and players, including Pianum Quartet, the Alar Quartet, Ha-Yang Kim, and Teressa McCollough. Samuel is a member of three bands: New York based Gisando Bin Laden and His MusicHadin, a free-improv quartet with electronic; exclusiveOr, a duo making music with vintage 60's and 70's synthesizers; and Austin, TX based Ready for Japan, an electronic duo looking to tour Japan. Sam's music is out on Quiet Design, Seamus, and Vox Novus record labels. His most recent release is either this or that, but certainly not both, an independently released exclusiveOr album. Sam is pursuing his Doctorate in Musical Arts at Columbia University in New York. In the summer, he teaches at The Walden School, a music program for young composers.

Scott Smallwood was born in Dallas, Texas and grew up in the Colorado Rockies. When he was 10 years old, his father gave him a tape recorder, which he used to record sounds around the house, soundtracks for puppet shows he created for his younger sisters, and rock and disco tunes off the radio. Eventually he became hooked on sound, and after making music on the piano, with analog synthesizers, and tape recorders, he began programming computers. His first computer was a Tandy Color Computer, and his first laptop was a Macintosh 145. His work has been presented worldwide, including recent presentations at Roulette in NYC, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the 2006 Sonic Circuits festival in Washington DC, and the Kulturhaus E-Werk in Frieburg, Germany. His work has been released on Autumn Records, Deep Listening, Televue, Simple Logic, Static Caravan, and Webbed Hand Records.

Alan Tormey’s “webs of sound” have been called both “disconcerting” and “avant.” Anthony Doerr, author of The Shell Collector and About Grace calls it “absolutely cool and unnerving, and nothing like I expected.” Speaking critically, seminal composer Milton Babbitt once referred to the composer as “Alan.” An opinion shared not only by the Princeton faculty, but his mother as well. Recent performances of Alan’s music have been given by, among others, the Catch Quartet, The New York Miniaturnist Ensemble, Ensemble Surplus, and the American Composers Orchestra. In his spare time he drinks soda.

Ge Wang received his B.S. in computer science from Duke University in 2000 and is currently a PhD candidate studying with Perry Cook at Princeton, Department of Computer Science. Ge’s research interests include computer music languages, interactive multimedia systems for sound synthesis/analysis, new performance ensembles and paradigms, visualization of sound, and methodologies for education in computer music, computer science, and new media. Ge is the author of the Chuck programme language and the Audicle environment, a founding developer and a co-director of the Princeton Laptop Orchestra, and a co-author of the TAPESTREA sound design environment. Ge performs with Perry as a live coding duo, and with fellow graduate student and comrade Rebecca Flebrink in a duet exploring new performance paradigms, cool audio software, and great food. In the fall, Ge will start as junior faculty at the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA) at Stanford University.
TBA

Ge Wang

On-the-fly programming, or live coding, is the practice of writing code in real-time to create music. This piece is our first attempt at large-scale, group live coding (15 humans/laptops) to create a single sound world. Players, divided into squadrons, follow instructions from a conducting live coder, who issues directives both in the form of code fragments (in the ChucK language) and sentence fragments (in the English language). In keeping with the crucial live coding tenet of revealing the process to the audience, the conducting machine will be projected 1) for all to observe and 2) as a means of instructing the ensemble.

Players begin with a simple code template, which they modify over the course of the performance to create and sculpt sound. Operations include code modifications, adding code (+) to be rendered into sound, or replacing existing code (-) with updates. "Rally points" are set throughout the template to coordinate group coding bombardments. The piece alternates between detailed code changes and sections in which players are encouraged to improvise. In on-the-fly programming, the code is the instrument, and it is played via the act of programming. Also, we never really know what's going to happen next (expect glorious disasters). Until it's performed, the piece remains TBA to all, including us...

Favorite Things or Titre français avec un petit Mondrian

Sam Pluta

Favorite Things began its life two years ago as a laptop quartet and was modified this year to fit the wonderful pentadecatet known as PLoRk. This piece uses samples of people talking about their favorite things (joyfulness ensues). Using a custom software interface, players improvise on the samples. The players are split into two groups (left and right), that, as the piece unfolds, merge into one (joyfulness ensues). The graphical display is created live algorithmically and is controlled by the conducting computer. Joyfulness ensues.