

**COMPOSERS ENSEMBLE**  
DEPARTMENT *of* MUSIC AT PRINCETON

# TRAVEL DIARY

works by nick brooke, betsey biggs,  
samson young & professor paul lansky

music performed by:

meehan/perkins percussion duo  
dither electric guitar quartet  
margaret lancaster, flute

**tuesday, october 21, 2008**

**8 pm**

**taplin auditorium in fine hall**

free admission

Information: 609-258-6842

barbara white and michael pratt, composers ensemble directors.  
additional funding provided by A. Watson Armour III.

~program~

1. *And Then There was Light*
2. *I Give You A Crumbling Horizon*

Samson Young

**DITHER guitar quartet**

Simon Kafka, *guitar*  
Taylor Levine, *guitar*  
Josh Lopes, *guitar*  
James Moore, *guitar*

*Travel Diary*

Paul Lansky

- I. Leaving Home
- II. Cruising Speed
- III. Lost in Philly
- IV. Arrived, Phone Home

**Meehan/Perkins percussion duo**

Todd Meehan, *percussion*  
Doug Perkins, *percussion*

~pause~

*Jarak Jauh*

Nick Brooke

Margaret Lancaster, *flute*

*Parallel Lives*

Betsey Biggs

- I. I am trying
- II. I'm so tired
- III. I was born

Margaret Lancaster, *flute*  
Hillary Spector, *director*

## PROGRAM NOTES

*And Then There Was Light* and *I Give You A Crumbling Horizon* are two scenes from my evening-length multi-media music theater *Hong Kong Explodes*.

— Samson Young

*Travel Diary* is a kind of meditation on travel, particularly for those who don't do it that much. While not literally programmatic, each movement has some characteristics that reflect the sense of its title. The first movement, *Leaving Home*, surveys the percussion ensemble, looking around to see what we've packed for the trip, making sure we have what we need. In the second movement, *Cruising Speed*, we get onto the highway or into the air and are on our way. The third movement, *Lost in Philly*, was inspired by a minor disaster I once had after packing my wife and two small children in the car for a trip from Princeton to Los Angeles and promptly taking a wrong turn leaving us searching for a way to get past Philadelphia (with the younger child asking 'are we there yet?'). Finally, the last movement, *Arrived, Phone Home*, has some references to old signaling devices, horn calls, morse code, and ends with a spirited feeling of relief to have finally arrived, only to sink into a relaxing sleep at the end. *Travel Diary* was commissioned by the Meehan/Perkins Duo in 2007 and first performed by them at the Round Top Festival in March 2008.

— Paul Lansky

*Jarak Jauh* is inspired by the saluang tradition of West Sumatra, in which two flutes play a single melody in close unison; subtle differences in each saluang's tuning and rhythm create a shimmering filigree. In *Jarak Jauh*, Margaret plays against a recorded doppelganger of herself, which begins in distant canon. Slowly, the flutes become one. Sumatran saluangs also enter the mix, further blurring the distinction between live musician and recording. The piece is influenced by the keening, chromatic tradition of some Western Sumatran music, in which the singer often bemoans the fact that one's 'other half' is missing or distant. In the matrilineal culture of West Sumatra, men tend to merantau, or travel far away in search of a livelihood, leaving the women to sing about their absence. 'Jarak jauh' means long distance. When Margaret Lancaster asked me to write a piece for her, I knew immediately that I wanted to create a piece that combined her awesome musical and improvisatory abilities with her equally developed talents as an actor and dancer.

— Nick Brooke

I got the idea for *Parallel Lives* late one night as I was absent-mindedly surfing the internet. I was exhausted, and typed the phrase "I'm so tired" into Google. As I read through the top search results, I became intrigued by the variety of responses to a shared emotional state, recognizing the results as a sort of eavesdropping on a modern zeitgeist. I subsequently searched for the phrases "I am trying" and "I was born;" together, it seems to me that these three fragments constitute the main trajectories of human life. The narration of the piece consists solely of the top search results for these three phrases. Around the same time, I was reading the Jose Luis Borges story, "The Garden of Forking Paths," in which all possible outcomes of an event occur simultaneously and diverge into an increasingly complex labyrinth of alternate worlds. I became interested in using the textual fragments I'd found to explore this idea.

In Tibetan Buddhist philosophy we are advised that each and every sentient being may have been our mother in a previous life. *Parallel Lives* considers the idea that everyone we meet may have been someone we knew – or even ourselves – in another life, and sets up three characters whose past, present and future lives interact in interesting ways through a cycle of life.

— Betsey Biggs

## THE COMPOSERS

**Betsey Biggs** is an artist and composer working with sound, video, interactivity, installation and performance. Her work aims to engage the audience, to expose the beautiful in the mundane, and to explore autobiography and reenactment, and has been seen and heard at venues including Issue Project Room, Experimental Intermedia, Sundance Film Festival, The Berkeley Art Museum, and MASSMoCA. Betsey's audiovisual work was recently profiled on online music magazine New Music Box. Upcoming projects include a video installation for four walls and a live audiovisual performance reshaping pop music videos. Betsey is a Ph.D. candidate at Princeton University researching public sound art.

**Nick Brooke** got his doctorate from the fine folks at Princeton. His recent work mixes musical sampling, lipsynching, and theater; vocalists and actors are trained to mimic sampled collages of sound effects, pop songs, and musical ephemera, blurring the line between recording and live performance. His work *Tone Test* received its premiere at Lincoln Center Festival in 2004, and two new theater works, *Mass* and *Time & Motion Study* were premiered at Mass MoCA and Bennington College in 2006 and 2008. A new piece, *Border Towns*, will be in production at HERE in NYC in 2010. Brooke's instrumental works have been performed by the Paul Drescher Ensemble, the Nash Ensemble of London, Orchestra 2001, Dan Druckman, and New York's Gamelan Son of Lion. He has received awards and residencies from the Guggenheim Foundation, ASCAP, the Rockefeller Foundation/Belagio, Djerassi, and the MacDowell Colony. He holds degrees in music composition and philosophy from Oberlin, and teaches at Bennington College.

**Paul Lansky's** recent projects include a guitar concerto, a solo percussion piece and an orchestra piece.

**Samson Young** was born in Hong Kong. He is currently a Ph. D fellow in composition at Princeton University. In June 2007, Young became the first artist from Hong Kong to receive the Bloomberg Emerging Artist Award. In the 2008 - 2009 season, Young will serve as Hong Kong Sinfonietta's Artist Associate, a collaboration that will result in several compositions for orchestra and electronics.

Since the early 2000, Samson Young has collaborated with artists from a wide range of disciplines including video art, contemporary dance, installation art and poetry. He has been the co-director of multi-disciplinary artist collective EmergencyLab since 2004. Informed by this cross-disciplinary interest, Young's compositions are marked by their consistent use

of visuals, multi-media and new technology as means of revitalizing the concert hall experience. His works have been presented in such festival as the Sydney Springs International New Music Festival (Australia 2001) and Canberra International Music Festival (Australia 2008); Bowdoin International Music Festival (US 2004) and Bang on a Can Music Summer Music Festival (US 2005); Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt (Germany 2006); Dark Music Days (Iceland 2008); Microwave International New Media Arts Festival (HK 2004), October Contemporary (HK 2007) and Shanghai New Music Week (2008).

For more information, please visit [www.samsonyoung.com](http://www.samsonyoung.com).

## THE PERFORMERS

### DITHER electric guitar quartet

DITHER is a quartet of electric guitarists who perform an energetic mix of composed music and improvisation, all orchestrated through a galaxy of stomp boxes and effects. Guitarists Simon Kafka, Taylor Levine, Josh Lopes and James Moore combined forces in 2007 with varied backgrounds in jazz, classical, and popular music. Since their debut concert at John Zorn's experimental music venue The Stone, the group has been gaining recognition as both an eclectic improvising group and a skilled chamber ensemble; their performances have brought them to Roulette, Princeton University, and a featured spot in the Extensible Electric Guitar Festival at Clark University. In the coming year, DITHER looks forward to new projects with Dean Drummond, director of the Harry Partch Newband, and Bryce Dessner, guitarist for the Clog and The National. The group will also be premiering a new multimedia theater piece by Samson Young, to be performed in New York and Hong Kong this coming fall. For more information, please visit [www.myspace.com/ditherquartet](http://www.myspace.com/ditherquartet).

**Margaret Lancaster, *flute***

Noted for her interdisciplinary collaborations and hailed as “our leading exponent of the avant-garde flute” (Kyle Gann, Village Voice), Margaret Lancaster has premiered over 100 pieces and has built a large repertoire of new works composed specifically for her that employ extended techniques, dance, drama, multi-media and electronics. Performance highlights include Lincoln Center Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, Ibsen Festival, Santa Fe New Music, Whitney Museum, Edinburgh Festival and Festival D’Automne. She has recorded on OO Discs, New World Records, Innova, Naxos and Tzadik, and was selected for Meet the Composer’s New Works for Soloist Champions project. An amateur furniture designer and avid tap dancer, Lancaster performs solo and chamber music concerts worldwide and acts in Lee Breuer’s OBIE-winning Mabou Mines Dollhouse ...www.margaretlancaster.com.

**Meehan/ Perkins Duo**

**Todd Meehan, *percussion***

**Douglas Perkins, *percussion***

Founded in 2006, the Meehan/ Perkins Duo (Todd Meehan and Douglas Perkins) has emerged as a driving force in new music through their compelling performances of new works for percussion. The Duo believes in cultivating relationships with living composers through commissions and collaborations that expand the percussion genre. Their repertoire encompasses the vast sound possibilities of percussion, including both acoustic and electro-acoustic works.

Todd and Doug first began collaborating in 1999 as founding members of So Percussion. They have since performed at countless venues across the country including the Bang on a Can Marathon, the BAM Next Wave Festival, Miller Theater, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, and the Round Top International Festival-Institute. Highlights of the 2008-2009 season include performances at the Stone in NYC, the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, and at Carnegie’s Weill Recital Hall. In addition to their performances the Duo regularly teaches master classes at universities throughout the country.

The Duo performs on Pearl/ Adams musical instruments, Vic Firth sticks and mallets, and Black Swamp accessories.

**Hillary Spector, *director***

Hillary Spector is a choreographer/director/performer based in New York City. She most recently directed *Out Of the Blue* for the PEN World Voices Festival, as well as performing in *The Archery Contest* at P.S. 122 (the piece was also broadcast via P.S. 1 Art Radio). She is looking forward to her second residency as a performer at Robert Wilson’s Watermill Center this fall as well as staging/choreographing the premiere of a new play by Angels Aymar at the National Theater of Cataluña in Barcelona. She has choreographed *Romeo et Juliette* for the Spoleto Festival USA, the world premiere of a Susan Sontag play, *A Parsifal*, at P.S. 122, and was the Movement Consultant for *Darkling* for American Opera Projects at Classic Stage Company. Past work includes: *Les Contes D’Hoffman* (L’ Opera de Angers and L’ Opera de Nantes); *Thais* with director Andrei Serban (L’ Opera de Nice), *Funeral Games* workshop (The Public Theatre); *La Cenerentola* with director Linda Brovsky (Seattle Opera); *Orphee aux Enfers* (Tivoli Theatre, Copenhagen); *How Nanita Learned To Make Flan* (Cincinnati Opera); L’ Opera Francais de New York’s *La Princesse Jaune* and *Djamileh* (Alice Tully Hall); and *Tamburlaine* (Target Margin Theater Lab). She has created her own movement theater versions of *Salome*, *Christabel* (based on the Samuel Taylor Coleridge poem), *Pélleas and Mélisande*, and *Carmen* which have been seen in New York City and Toronto. Hillary is currently Co-Artistic Director of Nomad Theatrical Company with Grant Neale, and was Artistic Director of Red Poppy Theater in New York City (both movement theater companies). She also was Co-Artistic Director of the Water Street Theatre with Jonathan Haugen. She is a past member of the Women’s Project & Productions Directors Lab and the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, and is a member of Actors Equity Association and the American Guild of Musical Artists. She has a Master of Fine Arts in Theater from California Institute of the Arts.

**Upcoming Composers Ensemble Concerts  
(Barbara White & Michael Pratt, directors)**

**Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop with Ensemble Klang

Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall, 8:00 p.m., free admission.

**Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**

NOW Ensemble

Works by David Little, Jasha Narveson, Anne Hege, Andrea Mazzariello,  
Ryan Brown, Mark Dancigers, and Judd Greenstein

Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall, 8:00 p.m., free admission.

**Upcoming Department of Music Events**

**Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Cappella Pratensis

“Sounds of Salvation: Music for a 15th Century Bruges Merchant”

Lecture by Prof. Jennifer Bloxam, Williams College

Princeton University Chapel, 8:00 p.m.

**Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>**

Princeton University & Harvard University Glee Clubs

Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall, 8:00 p.m.

Contact Ernest Clark at 609-258-6842 or [ernestc@princeton.edu](mailto:ernestc@princeton.edu)

**Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>**

Election night FFMUP!

Ecstasy Mule: experimental/blues/country duo from New York, with a special election night set

Daniel Iglesia: mind-bending audio-visual laptop tomfoolery, with live processing of election coverage

Terrace, 9:00 p.m. Free admission. Info: [ffmupshows@gmail.com](mailto:ffmupshows@gmail.com)

**Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>**

“Penelope”- a music-theater piece featuring Ellen McLaughlin and a string quartet with original music by Sarah Kirkland Snider.

Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall, 8:00 p.m., free admission but tickets required. Call University Ticketing at 609-258-9220 or go to the website [www.princeton.edu/utickets](http://www.princeton.edu/utickets)

Co-sponsored by the Department of Music, Department of Theater, and the Lewis Center

**Princeton University Department of Music**

Steven Mackey, chair

Ernest Clark, concert coordinator

Marilyn Ham, department manager

Alexander Kass, technical director

Cynthia Masterson, office assistant

Gregory Smith, academic programs manager

Kyle Subramaniam, business manager

Joseph Vizzini, piano technician



**Production Personnel**

Christopher Gorzelnik, production supervisor

John Burton, production technician

Liz Lammer, production technician

Bill Pierce, production technician



**Student Ushers**

Daniel Jaffe, head usher

Alison Carey

Yudai Chiba

Mike DiStefano

Martha Ferguson

Alexandra Jerez-Fernandez

Mengsi Li

Megan McPhee

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