

Tuesday, February 28, 2012 at 8:00PM  
Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall

**The Composers Ensemble at Princeton**  
**Barbara White and Michael Pratt, Directors**

**DITHER ELECTRIC GUITAR QUARTET**

Taylor Levine  
Joshua Lopes  
James Moore  
Gyan Riley

*When they want milk, they scratch the ground ...*

**Matt Marble**

*When they want milk, they scratch the ground ...* grew out of a song that I had written in 2011. Then, inspired by film soundtracks from my childhood (1980's) and by hearing the Indiana-based psych-rock band, Crys, play at The Gutter one night in Brooklyn ... I came to make this musical madeleine. I'm lucky and joy-filled to be working with Dither on this - Thanks for strumming a chord. The title refers to a myth about maenads in ancient Greece:

“When one of these maenads needed nourishment, she struck her thyrsus into the earth, and forth there gushed a limpid Spring of water, or, if she craved a stronger drink the god sent up a stream of wine in place of water. Such of the women as wished for a draught of milk had but to scratch the soil with their finger-tips, and there they had milk in abundance.”

James Reuel Smith

*Springs and Wells in Greek and Roman Literature: Their Legends and Locations.*

Thanks to ... Alan Hovhaness, Jim Carrey, Crys, PeeWee Herman, Manos Hadjidakis, Emma Lipp, Bacchus, and Apollo.

*Nucleation Points*

**Konrad Kaczmarek**

With *Nucleation Points*, I wanted to create a piece that uses the standard delay/loop pedal in a more textural and less groovy way. On one extreme, I wanted to explore using longer amounts of time so that the eventual repetition becomes disassociated with the original sound, obscuring

the periodicity of the loop or delay. Conversely, as a sequence of notes is played into a very short loop, the cohesiveness of the phrase is lost as the horizontal melody turns into a vertical sonority or texture. These techniques are applied to each or the four members of the ensemble in uneven proportions, further masking the overall loopiness. The name comes from the stage in the process in which crystals precipitate out of solution.

#### *Unknowable City No. 5*

**Elliot Cole**

I spent most of last fall programming a composition tool that embodied the tension between the aleatory and the serial, and, through that tension, generated a rich universe for deep listening. I worked on it obsessively, spending countless hours listening to structures it presented, which I called 'blooms': small sets of notes, as few as three and no more than nine, played in a precise but unmetric gestures and separated by silences that could take on an almost unbearable sumptuousness and poignancy. With it I wrote a handful of chamber pieces that I'm tentatively calling *Unknowable Cities*, which I saw as studies for this music for Dither. But as this piece drew closer, I started to sense diminishing returns in my relationship with the software. As I became sensitized to this environment, I became more discriminating. Conviction was harder to come by. Large-scale form, in particular, eluded me. I persevered, pretended each bloom had a life-cycle, modeled sets of them in a formal grammar borrowed from botany, invented ways for them to grow and split and spread their DNA, listened to generation after generation of this pretend organicism, wrote another piece, wrote a program that spun out whole ecosystems while I slept, gave a lecture about the whole bloated fantasy and then sat down to write this piece for Dither the only way I could — at the piano, with a pencil, using what I'd learned but feeling with my fingers and ears until the notes were just right.

Part of me is disappointed that I couldn't take it all the way. I'd invented a rigor that I couldn't sustain, an ethic I ultimately betrayed. But maybe that's what machines are for: I built a tiny synthetic universe for myself to train in, to sensitize my ears to new musical forces, to evolve, perhaps, new organs of perception -- and then, like a booster rocket, I let it fall away.

#### Overture

**Troy Herion**

Overture is a quartet that combines the muscle and athleticism of electric guitars with early 19th-century symphonic overtures.

#### *Ones*

the wah one,  
the driving one,  
the warped one,  
the floaty one

Success demands repetition.

*Please join us for a reception in the downstairs lobby after the performance.*

#### ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

**Dither**, a New York based electric guitar quartet, is dedicated to an eclectic mix of experimental repertoire which spans composed music, improvisation, and electronic manipulation. Formed in 2007, the quartet has performed in the United States and abroad, presenting new commissions, original compositions, improvisations, multimedia works, and large guitar ensemble pieces. With sounds ranging from clean pop textures to heavily processed noise, from tight rhythmic unity to cacophonous sound mass, all of Dither's music wholeheartedly embraces the beautiful, engulfing, and often gloriously loud sound of electric guitars.

Dither's recent collaborators include downtown bagpiper Matthew Welch, composers Eve Beglarian and David Lang, and guitarist/composers Bryce Dessner, Nick Didkovsky, Marco Cappelli, Elliott Sharp, and Mark Stewart. In Fall of 2008, the quartet traveled to Hong Kong to premiere an evening-length theatrical work by Samson Young, *Hong Kong Explodes!* funded by the Hong Kong Council

**Jascha Narveson**

for the Arts. Recent performances in New York include the Performa Biennial, The MATA Festival Interval Series, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Bang on a Can Marathon, at which they performed a monstrous rendition of Eric KM Clark's *exPAT*, a Dither commission for hearing-deprived guitar orchestra. Dither's debut album was released on Henceforth Records in June 2010.

#### ABOUT THE COMPOSERS

**Elliot Cole** is a composer who also uses video art and computer programming to explore liminal spaces in individual consciousness and cultural memory. His chamber music has been performed by Psappha (UK), the Metropolis Ensemble, Brentano Quartet, Ensemble ACJW, members of the Lucerne Festival Academy and Lucerne Conservatory, violinist Tema Watstein, harpist Mollie Marcuson, guitarist Flavio Virzi, singers Nicole Rodin, Misha Pnton, Caroline Shaw and Alison Fletcher, and the Sissy Eared Mollycoddles. 2012 sees new premieres by the Flux quartet with bassist Logan Coale, So Percussion, and pianist Conor Hanick.

**Troy Herion** is an interdisciplinary composer aiming to unite contemporary music with the visual arts, film, and theater. He is currently pursuing a joint Ph.D. in Composition and Interdisciplinary Humanities (IHUM).

**Konrad Kaczmarek** is a composer, musician, and programmer whose music incorporates live audio processing and improvisation, drawing freely on his diverse musical and technical background. As a soloist, he has performed at the Sonorities Festival at Queens University in Belfast, The SoundBytes Festival in Halifax NS, Bargemusic, The Stone, Joyce SoHo, The Chelsea Art Museum, and the 92nd Street Y. His compositions have been performed by an eclectic group of performers and ensembles including Janus, Psappha, Kate Campbell, PLOrk, and the NOW Ensemble. He has been awarded residencies at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, The Banff Centre in Canada, and STEIM in The Netherlands. His freelance programming and performing have taken him to the Kunstnernes Hus in Oslo,

**Norway**, The New Zealand International Arts Festival, The 2008 Whitney Biennial Performance Series, the Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, “Works and Process” at the Guggenheim, and The Strings of Autumn Festival at the Estate Theater in Prague. More recently, he has been developing a real-time audio processing program called *Tide* for the performance artist Laurie Anderson. He received a B.A. in music from Yale, a M.Mus in electronic music composition from Goldsmiths, University of London, and is currently pursuing his doctoral degree in composition at Princeton.

**Matt Marble** is in his 4th year as a Princeton Ph.D. candidate. He is currently completing his dissertation on the music of composer/performer Arthur Russell, recording an album of songs with his band Sharksleep, and leaving all the doors open. [memarble@gmail.com](mailto:memarble@gmail.com).

**Jascha Narveson**: <http://www.jaschanarveson.com>

**Next Composers Ensemble at Princeton Concert:** Tuesday, March 13, 2012, Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall, featuring the **Flux String Quartet** and Electric Bass (**Logan Cole**) performing works by **Elliot Cole, Matt Marble, Gilad Cohen, and Professor Paul Lansky**.