Welcome...

I am delighted to welcome you to our concert today, just a sample of the richness and diversity of our musical offerings throughout the year.

Composition, Performance, and Scholarship—these are the central activities of the undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty in the Department of Music.

The intellectual and artistic life in the Department of Music is enhanced not only by our superb faculty, but also our internationally acclaimed Ph.D. programs in musicology and composition. We invite you to sample our Composers Ensemble Concerts, where you can hear premieres of new works by our graduate and faculty composers, or take advantage of the many pre-concert lectures and conferences sponsored by our musicologists.

Our music majors spend their senior years as composers, conductors, music historians, producers, directors, and performers. Some will go on to major performing careers, such as Anthony Roth Costanzo '04, who will be making his Metropolitan Opera debut this season, and others will be accepted by the best graduate music programs in the country. The Department of Music’s certificate programs in Musical Performance and Jazz Studies allow undergraduate students from across the University to study and play music at the highest level, nurturing a lifelong passion for music and a commitment to the performing arts.

In addition, we provide to the greater student community of Princeton University the opportunity to perform in our departmental ensembles: the Orchestra, Glee Club, Jazz Ensembles, Sinfonia, Musica Alta and Wind Ensemble and to take private instrumental and vocal lessons. Finally, we are particularly proud of having played a leading role at Princeton in the campus-wide arts initiative through our support of innovative collaborations in the arts and humanities, ranging from the performance of newly edited baroque operas to reconstructions of ballets by Sergei Prokofiev.

We look forward to seeing you at our next Music Department event!

With best wishes for a rewarding academic year,

Wendy Heller
Professor and Acting Chair, Department of Music

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 …

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 (1980s) 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 Hovaness, Jim Carrey, Crys, PeeWee Herman, Manos Hadjidakis, Emma Lipp, Bacchus, and Apollo.

Nucleation Points

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 looseness. The name comes from the stage in the process in which crystals precipitate out of solution.

Unknown 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 gesture 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 Unknown 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 then grow and split and spread their DNA, listened to generation after generation of this pretend organism, 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.

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, engulfting, 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 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 Marcouso, guitarist Flavio Virzi, singers Nicole Rodin, Misha Priton, 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 Amsterdam. His freelance programming and performing have taken him to the Kunsthernes 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 Tidel 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 Shardsleep, and leaving all the doors open.

Jascha Narveson: http://www.jaschanarveson.com