

Tuesday, April 15th, 2014 at 8:00pm
Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall
Princeton University, Princeton, NJ



Dan Trueman, Director
Michael Pratt, Resident Conductor

presents

JACK QUARTET
Christopher Otto, violin
Ari Streisfeld, violin
John Pickford Richards, viola
Kevin McFarland, cello

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JONATHAN RUSSELL

Déjà vu

JACK Quartet

Jonathan Russell, clarinet/bass clarinet

When I played the midi of an early draft of the first movement of *Déjà vu* for my wife, her first comment was “Wow, that clarinet guy’s really annoying, isn’t he!” I suppose so. Does that make this piece autobiographical? Don’t answer.

The clarinet lick is indeed a bit annoying perhaps, but hopefully catchy and fun as well. It leads the ensemble through a meandering maze of different sections, all in triple time, with varying degrees of waltziness, before ending, unsatisfyingly, with a memory of the opening material.

The second movement is string chorales, wafting clarinet fragrances, and a climactic but disappointingly short appearance of the bass clarinet. There’s also a small amount of Fun with Quarter Tones – just enough to annoy you or if you’re not into that, but not enough to satisfy you if you are.

The third movement is a quasi-repetition of the first (hence the work’s title), but with some bits extended, truncated, transposed, etc. Pretty much like a traditional sonata form recapitulation actually, though the title makes it seem as if it’s a Big Deal and an Original Idea, rather than the Time and Labor Saving and Deadline Meeting Enabling Device that it actually is.

I had very high hopes for this piece. I intended for it to be a Serious Clarinet Quintet, right up there with Mozart and Brahms. It didn’t quite turn out that way, but I hope it’s still reasonably enjoyable and engaging, on its own humbler terms.

DAVE MOLK

Ether

JACK Quartet

Jonathan Russell, bass clarinet

This piece showcases the expansive registral range of Jon Russell and the expansive color range of the JACK Quartet.

TROY HERION

Quartet

JACK Quartet

Quartet diverts from my tendency towards large and theatrical music and visual compositions. This piece is simple and at ease. It finds comfort in the energy and sequencing of Baroque forms.

—INTERMISSION—

CAROLINE SHAW

Ritornello 2.sq.2.j

JACK Quartet

Ritornello is a long-term project, begun in 2008 with a minor obsession with the *Prologue* of Monteverdi’s *Orfeo* and the baroque ritornello aria form. The first real iteration of *Ritornello* came about through a two-week residency with Opera Cabal in Chicago, in January 2012, during which I performed a 20-minute solo with film and a few theatrical accessories. For two performances in October 2013 I expanded the film to 30 minutes and wrote parallel scores, one for eight voices (*Roomful of Teeth*) and one for string quartet (*ACME*). Tonight’s performance is an abbreviated (15 minute) version for quartet alone. Future iterations in different configurations are planned for 2015, with planned revisions to the film.

It’s hard to explain all of the little notions that fuel *Ritornello*. I suppose one could say it’s my own exploration of the idea of the refrain. It is also about memory, simplicity, forgetting, functional harmony (as one friend said, “that piece is all like V-I-V-I-V”), the strangeness of familiarity, as well as Rip Van Winkle, Nietzsche, Terrence Malick, and a small pile of other things.

It’s also, as implied by the name, a musical project that I find myself returning to again and again. It’s not a fixed piece, no one commissioned it, and nobody really knows what it is yet. I’m looking forward to living with some of this material for a very long time.

Many thanks to the JACK Quartet for playing this “.j” version of *Ritornello 2.sq.2*.

NINFEA CRUTTWELL-READE

“Ich ewiges Kind”

JACK Quartet

“Ich ewiges Kind” responds to a poem by the Austrian artist, Egon Schiele. The title— *“I eternal child”*—alludes to Schiele’s predicament as an adolescent in fin-de-siècle Vienna with an acute awareness of sexuality. This awareness was brought to the fore in his art, which often united the respectable genre of fine portraiture with sexually explicit depictions of the human form. As a child Schiele witnessed the horrifying mental and physical deterioration of his father, who had contracted syphilis. Portrayed in contorted positions with jagged limbs and searching glances, Schiele’s subjects, too, were depicted as caught between extremes of sensual ecstasy and death.

My string quartet offers a glimpse of this world through the innocent lens of the Viennese classical string quartet. I explore the role of voice in the history of the string quartet genre, a concept that notably occasioned the introduction of song in Arnold Schoenberg’s *String Quartet No. 2*.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

The **JACK Quartet** electrifies audiences worldwide with “explosive virtuosity” (*The Boston Globe*) and “viscerally exciting performances” (*The New York Times*). David Patrick Stearns (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*) proclaimed their performance as being “among the most stimulating new-music concerts of my experience.” *The Washington Post* commented, “The string quartet may be a 250-year-old contraption, but young, brilliant groups like the JACK Quartet are keeping it thrillingly vital.” Alex Ross (*The New Yorker*) hailed their performance of Iannis Xenakis’ complete string quartets as being “exceptional” and “beautifully harsh,” and Mark Swed (*The Los Angeles Times*) called their sold-out performances of Georg Friedrich Haas’ *String Quartet No. 3 In iij. Noct.* “mind-blowingly good.”

The recipient of New Music USA’s 2013 Trailblazer Award, the quartet has performed to critical acclaim at Carnegie Hall (USA), Lincoln Center (USA), Wigmore Hall (United Kingdom), Suntory Hall (Japan), Salle Pleyel (France), Muziekgebouw aan ’t IJ (Netherlands), La Biennale di Venezia (Italy), the Lucerne Festival (Switzerland), Bali Arts Festival (Indonesia), Reykjavik Arts Festival (Iceland), Festival Internacional Cervantino (Mexico), Kölner Philharmonie (Germany), Donaueschinger Musiktage (Germany), Wittener Tage für neue Kammermusik (Germany), and Darmstadt Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik (Germany).

Comprising violinists Christopher Otto and Ari Streisfeld, violist John Pickford Richards, and cellist Kevin McFarland, JACK is focused on the commissioning and performance of new works, leading them to work closely with composers Derek Bermel, Chaya Czernowin, James Dillon, Brian Ferneyhough, Beat Furrer, Georg Friedrich Haas, Vijay Iyer, György Kurtág, Helmut Lachenmann, Steve Mackey, Matthias Pintscher, Steve Reich, Wolfgang Rihm, Salvatore Sciarrino, and John Zorn. Upcoming and recent premieres include works by Wolfgang von Schweinitz, Toby Twining, Georg Friedrich Haas, Simon Holt, Kevin Ernste, and Simon Bainbridge.

JACK has led workshops with young performers and composers at Princeton University, Yale University, Harvard University, New York University, Columbia University, the Eastman School of Music, Oberlin Conservatory, Manhattan School of Music, June in Buffalo, New Music on the Point, and at the Darmstadt Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik. In addition to working with composers and performers, JACK seeks to broaden and diversify the potential audience for new music through educational presentations designed for a variety of ages, backgrounds, and levels of musical experience.

The members of the quartet met while attending the Eastman School of Music and studied closely with the Arditti Quartet, Kronos Quartet, Muir String Quartet, and members of the Ensemble Intercontemporain.

ABOUT THE COMPOSERS

Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade is a first-year composition graduate student at Princeton University. She studied at Magdalen College, Oxford, where she produced music for theater, and later received postgraduate tuition in cello performance at the Royal Academy of Music, London. As a cellist at the Academy she performed many new works, and designed *Playing with Rituals*—a concert project that saw her present her own electroacoustic composition alongside pieces by Kaija Saariaho and Benjamin Britten. Her recent projects have included *Visions of Nature's Grace*, a large-scale choral setting of Gerard Manley Hopkins texts commissioned by More House School, and a collection of preludes tracing the decay of a damaged piano.

Troy Herion is a composer and filmmaker whose works unite contemporary music with visual arts through chamber and orchestral music, opera, theater, dance, and film. Compositions have been performed by American Composers Orchestra, Sō Percussion, Crash Ensemble, Nash Ensemble of London, and Brentano String Quartet. His visual-music compositions including *Baroque Suite* and *New York: A City Symphony* have been called “marvelous” by *The New Yorker* critic Alex Ross and were featured on MTV, *The New York Times*, and performed at Carnegie Hall. Most recently he completed a film score for *The Dog* which premiered at SXSW and will be in wide theatrical release in 2015. He is currently in pre-production on *A Period of Animate Existence*, a new music and theater work commissioned by Pig Iron Theatre for two choirs, instruments, and actors. A choir of children and a choir of adults sing to each other about planetary cycles, reproduction, and inheritance. www.troyherion.com

Dave Molk is in his 3rd year at Princeton. He writes mainly for pitched and non-pitched percussion, combining an energized rhythmic propulsion, sinuous chromaticism, and a love of glitch. His current research efforts are in software coding and EDM. He previously studied composition at Berklee College of Music under John Bavicchi and at Tufts University under John McDonald.

Jonathan Russell is a composer, bass clarinetist, conductor, and educator, whose work has been hailed as “incredibly virtuosic, rocking, and musical” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*) and “a fantastically distorted perpetual motion of awesome” (*I Care If You Listen*). He has received commissions from ensembles such as the San Francisco Symphony, Peninsula Symphony, Imani Winds, Empyrean Ensemble, ADORNO Ensemble, Woodstock Chamber Orchestra, Wild

Rumpus, and the Great Noise Ensemble, and performances from numerous other ensembles and performers, including the Berkeley Symphony, Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, Sō Percussion, Third Coast Percussion, Yarn/Wire, the NakedEye Ensemble, Ensemble Pi, The Living Earth Show, DZ4, the BluePrint Project, REDSHIFT, Roomful of Teeth, Ensemble Avalon, Twiolins, the new music bands FIREWORKS, Capital M, and Oogog, pianist-percussionist Danny Holt, and pianists Sarah Cahill, Lisa Moore, Lara Downes, Matthew McCright, Kate Campbell, and Regina Schaffer. His works are published by Potenza Music Publishing, BCP Music, and Peer Music, and his music has been recorded by the Sqwonk bass clarinet duo, the Kairos Consort, pianist Jeffrey Jacob, The Living Earth show, Imani Winds, and the Twiolins. As a performer, Jonathan is a member of two ground-breaking bass clarinet chamber ensembles: the heavy metal-inspired Edmund Welles Bass Clarinet Quartet and the Sqwonk Bass Clarinet Duo, which is commissioning and recording new works by established and emerging composers to create a new repertoire of bass clarinet duo music. He has appeared as soloist with the Peninsula Symphony, Hudson Valley Philharmonic, West Point Military Academy Band, Harvard's Bach Society Orchestra, the Woodstock Chamber Orchestra, the San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra, the Great Noise Ensemble, the NakedEye Ensemble, and the Omaha Symphonic Winds. He is also a co-founder of San Francisco's Switchboard Music Festival. He holds degrees from Harvard University and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in the Composition program at Princeton University.

Caroline Shaw is a fourth-year graduate student in composition in the Department of Music.