



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
INTERNATIONAL CONCERT SERIES
October - December 2015**

**Grey Area and Alex McLean
perform music by Hugh Davies**

**Saturday 17 October
6:00pm**

Programme £1

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

PROGRAMME

Hugh Davies – *Printmusic* (1987)

David Keane – *Les Voix Spectrales (des Oeufs Tranchés)* (1987)

Hugh Davies – Galactic Interfaces (1967-8)

INTERVAL

Hugh Davies – *Mobile with Differences* (1973)

Alex McLean – *Printmusic – Live Coded*

Alex McLean – Live Coded Set

PROGRAMME NOTES

Hugh Davies – *Printmusic* (1987)

for dot-matrix printer

Alex McLean, Computer; Owen Green, Microphones

Printmusic is a piece for a solo dot-matrix printer. Anybody who had a home computer or worked in an office up to about 1990 will certainly be familiar with the very distinctive sound that these printers made, as the set of tiny metal rods (the dot matrix) impacted upon an inked ribbon to construct the printed letters on the page. In this piece the performer—or is it the composer?—is instructed to:

Create sounds and pieces for a dot-matrix printer by typing a “verbal” score onto the computer and printing it out. Experiment with several possible variations, such as: style from rhythmic or syncopated to very free; words (intelligible or gibberish) with different numbers of characters and/or punctuation symbols; [...] page margins from very narrow to very large; the use of repeated print features [...] such as double strike, bold and underlining; printout lengths from one or several A4 sheets to an accordion-style block of continuous computer paper.

Technically, any dot-matrix printer could be used for a performance of this piece, and any text file. In this particular performance, however, we will hear a ‘score’ typed by Davies himself, which will be printed on an Epson LX80 dot-matrix printer—the kind of printer that Davies used.

An interesting feature of this piece is that the score is actually produced during the performance!

Hugh Davies – *Mobile with Differences* (1973, rev. 1982)

for 5 musicians with portable instruments, 2 sine-wave generators and 2 loudspeakers

Emma Lloyd, Viola; Dave Murray-Rust, Electronics; Armin Sturm, Recorder; Shiori Usui, Voice; Sean Williams, Electronics

Mobile with Differences is a music theatre piece in which the five performers play a card game that determines how the piece progresses. At the start of the piece, each player is dealt a set of cards. The cards contain instructions, which tell the players to play solo, in a duet with another player, or in a duet with one of two on-stage loudspeakers, which are connected to a pair of electronic sine-wave generators. (A sine-wave generator is a piece of

electronic equipment, which produces a basic, pitched, electronic tone.) When a player is instructed to play solo, they move to one of three 'solo' chairs to do so, following the instructions on their card which describe what they should play. When a player is instructed to play in a duet with another player, they move to join another player at one of three pairs of chairs and, again, follow their instructions, which in this case tell them how to interact with the other player. Thus, there are nine chairs on stage. When a player is instructed to duet with a loudspeaker, they move to a loudspeaker and pick up another card (which they find in a pile next to the loudspeaker), which contains instructions about how to adjust the pitch of the oscillator; then, they follow the instructions on their original card, which describes how to 'duet' with the loudspeaker.

Many (though not all) of the cards contain instructions that have to do with producing 'difference tones.' A difference tone is something that happens when two notes which are close in pitch—close, but not quite identical—are played simultaneously. Sometimes the results will simply sound 'out of tune', but with careful adjustments to one or both of the pitches it is possible to produce a difference tone—a phantom 'third pitch' that neither player (or loudspeaker) is actually playing, but which is the result of the interaction (sum and difference) between the two pitches that truly are being played. Difference tones are not always easy for the untrained ear to hear, but with a little practice can be quite easily perceived.

Many of the other cards have to do with the musical relationships between the players, and often include a theatrical, sometimes humorous, element; for example, 'If another player joins you [in a duet], respond (musically) gruffly, briefly, as if in annoyance at being disturbed.'

Because the players are following instructions on cards in a random sequence—the cards are shuffled before the piece starts—the piece will evolve differently with each performance. Sometimes, the instructions on a player's card are impossible to carry out—for example, if there is no-one available to play a duet with, or if all the solo chairs or loudspeakers are currently 'taken.' If this happens, the player swaps the card with their next card and the game continues. There are also a few 'wild' cards that tell the player, e.g. to repeat their last card, or move to a different position.

Hugh Davies was fond of puns and word-play. In this case, 'mobile' can be thought of as referring both to the structure of the work, which is different with each playing, and to the performers themselves, who are 'mobile' throughout the performance. Likewise, 'differences' can be thought of as

referring to the 'differences' between successive performances, but also to the use of difference tones in the piece.

Special thanks to Caitlin Mockridge for preparing a new set of the playing cards from Davies's originals.

David Keane – *Les Voix Spectrales (des Oeufs Tranchés)* (1987)

for 2 egg slicers, 2 telephone electromagnets, one small spring, and computer-generated tape
[fixed media only version]

This piece by the Canadian electroacoustic composer David Keane was commissioned by Hugh Davies, following a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts. The piece was scored for two amplified metal egg-slicers—one of Davies's favourite performance instruments—and a computer generated tape part.

In performance, Davies played the two egg-slicers rather like miniature harps, using two magnets removed from telephone handsets for amplification. A small spring was also used. The title translates as 'The spectral voices (of egg slicers)'. According to Davies's programme note:

The title is significant only in that the composer identified, in experimenting with Davies's instruments, qualities vaguely suggestive of voices. Some speculation about how the shape and tactile qualities of a hard-cooked egg might be projected into the sound domain suggested more fantastic voices and the basis for a piece which blends digitally-generated sounds with the live sounds of Davies's instruments. The accompaniment is generated using Yamaha CX5M, DX7, TX7, and TX81Z digital synthesizers, a Roland S-50 digital sampler and a Roland DEP-5 digital processor. Using an IBM-PC and Roger Powell's Texture II software to coordinate these digital resources, the accompaniment may be generated live during the performance, but *Les Voix Spectrales* may also be performed with the accompaniment pre-recorded on tape.

The piece received its première performance in London, at a concert staged by the Electroacoustic Music Association of Great Britain (EMAS) on 9 October 1987. What we are going to hear this evening is a recording of that première performance, transferred from an analogue tape recording in Davies's own collection.

Special thanks are due to David Keane and Melba Cuddy-Keane for making materials, including the score, available.

Hugh Davies – *Galactic Interfaces* (1967-8)

for 6 performers, 4 self-built amplified instruments, 2 stereo tapes and electronic equipment

Owen Green, Sound Projection and Electronics; Sean Williams, Electronics; Emma Lloyd, Dave Murray-Rust, Armin Sturm, Shiori Usui, Homemade Instruments and Contact Mics

In this semi-improvised piece, four of the performers play small, self-built instruments made from wood, plastic, metal, and glass, and amplified using contact microphones – this was one of Davies's particular specialisms. These different materials were chosen because of the contrasting sounds they produce. The other two performers operate electronic equipment to transform the sounds and distribute them among four loudspeakers, positioned in the four corners of the room. There are also two stereo tapes (transferred to a digital format from Davies's originals for this performance) that contain a range of recorded material, including electronic sounds, recordings of short-wave radio, and instrumental music, as well as recordings of some of Davies's own self-built amplified sound-producing devices. According to Davies's original programme note:

The title refers to the combination and contrast of the sounds on four tape tracks with each other and with live sounds produced by the four performers, as well as to the varied use of modulating, mixing and switching devices (including a 4-channel photocell divider); it also applies to the interpretations of the four performers, who have been chosen for their very different musical backgrounds.

Thus, the piece is about interactions (interfaces) and contrasts: contrasts between sound materials (wood, plastic, metal, glass, plus the recorded sounds); contrasts in electronic processing; and contrasts in the interpretations and 'musical personalities' of the performers.

This piece was the first work of electronic music to be produced at the Electronic Music Workshop at Goldsmiths College, which Davies set up in late 1967. (The Workshop was the first ever electronic music studio at a UK higher education institution.) *Galactic Interfaces* was premièred in a concert at the London Planetarium on 22 March 1968, but the performance did not go well. We hope—touch wood (and metal, glass, and plastic)—that this evening's performance is more successful.

Alex McLean – *Printmusic* – *Live Coded*

for dot-matrix printer and computer programming language

Alex McLean, Computer; Owen Green, Microphones

In this performance, Alex McLean will produce music with the dot-matrix printer—not by sending a pre-typed text file to it, as one would normally do when printing a document—but by ‘live coding’ it; that is, by sending individual letters, numbers, and symbols to the printer in real time, during the performance. Alex will not, however, be typing the letters individually, but rather, he will be typing computer code that *generates* the text that gets sent to the printer. As changes are made to the code, there will be corresponding changes—sometimes complex and possibly unpredictable—to the text that gets sent to the printer.

This is not *Printmusic* as Davies envisaged it, but a development of the piece that incorporates live coding techniques that have only really come to the fore in the past decade or so.

Printmusic – Live Coded will be followed by a live coded set that includes the sounds of the printer alongside other, sampled/synthesized sounds.

BIOGRAPHIES

Owen Green

Owen is a composer-improviser who focuses on electronic music. He is active in a number of groups, including Sileni (improvised doom-crunk hip-hop), Tri/fon (live laptops) and the large improvising ensemble EdImpro. Recent projects have included 'Perch' with Stephen Deazley and Conflux; 'Limits to Growth', a mutating sound installation with Martin Parker, and a new Sileni recording released on Black Lantern music. Owen also teaches sound design and electronic music at the University of Edinburgh.

Armin Sturm

Armin Sturm is a double bass player and improviser based in Glasgow. A member of Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra, Armin has played with the likes of George Lewis, Evan Parker, and most recently Marshall Allen and Henry Grimes (Sun Ra Arkestra).

Sean Williams

Sean Williams is a practice-led researcher based at the University of Edinburgh, focusing on the performance practice of electronic music. He

balances research into historic practices at the WDR Studio for Electronic Music in Cologne in the 1950s with building new hybrid analogue/digital instruments for live electronics and sound projection. Co-founder of LLEAPP, the Monosynth Orchestra, and the ensemble Grey Area, he performs his own compositions and electronic and structured improvisation repertoire internationally.

Shiori Usui

Originally from Japan, Shiori is described as a composer with “individual ears” (The Times). In 2012, her orchestral piece *Warai* (Laughter) received the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award in Tokyo, Japan (judge: Toshio Hosokawa) and in the same year, the Civitella Ranieri Music Fellowship in conjunction with the UNESCO-Aschberg Bursaries. July 2015 saw the première of Shiori’s new work *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis s.l.* at the BBC Proms, performed by BCMG with conductor Franck Ollu at Cadogan Hall in London.

Shiori has produced works in radical instrumental music, and has worked with motion capturing sensors and biophysical technology. Many of her compositions are inspired by the sounds of the human body, the deep sea, and many other weirdly wonderful living organisms in the world.

Shiori enjoys playing improvisation in the UK and abroad as a vocalist and pianist, and has performed with musicians such as Arve Henriksen, Ilan Volkov, Rie Nakajima, and Lee Patterson.

Emma Lloyd

Emma is a violinist, violist, performer and teacher based in Edinburgh. Her work ranges from period baroque performance to collaborations with composers on cutting-edge new music.

She is one half of the violin/electronic duo KUBOV, with Jess Aslan, and together they run new music night Sonic Warehouse which aims to promote contemporary performers and their music.

Emma regularly plays with pianist Karin Schistek, is a founding member of the Eris Ensemble, violinist with the Ison Quartet and violist with a new string trio recently formed with Julia Lungu and Justyna Jabłonska.

Additionally, Emma has premiered works by composers including Matthew Sergeant, Ian Vine, Charlie Usher, Gemma McGregor and Jess Aslan.

Emma is currently working towards a PhD at the University of Edinburgh with Peter Nelson and Nikki Moran, investigating indeterminacy in the

performance of new music. Prior to this, she completed a Bachelor's degree with honours at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, and a Master's in musicology at the University of Edinburgh. During her time in Manchester, she studied violin with Eyal Kless, and viola with Michael Gurevich and since returning to Scotland, she has had tuition from Ruth Crouch, Ruth Slater, and Mieko Kanno. She is a freelance violin and viola teacher in Edinburgh and is also a tutor in contemporary improvisation at the University of Edinburgh

Dave Murray-Rust

Dave sits in between people and computers and tries to make them both do interesting things. He is a researcher in Informatics at the University of Edinburgh, looking at approaches to online interaction. As well as Grey Area, he plays with Edimpro (a large improvising ensemble) and Tr-I/O-Fon (a laptop trio) as well as playing solo as mo-seph. He is interested in how technology can support human interaction, through digital responsiveness and animacy.

Alex McLean

Alex McLean (<http://yaxu.org/>) is a live coder, interdisciplinary researcher, and teaching fellow in the University of Leeds, whose work includes coordinating the live coding research network and is principal investigator of the AHRC Weaving Codes project.

Alex has performed widely over the past 15 years, including at the Sonar, Ars Electronica, STRP, Transmediale, Sonic Acts and Incubate festivals, and the Tate Modern, ICA and Arnolfini galleries. His collaborations include being one third of the live coding band Slub (<http://slub.org>), one half of the drum+code band Canute (<http://canute.lurk.org>), as well as performing with Leafcutter John, Paul Hession and the roots band Rafiki Jazz. His cross-disciplinary performance projects include work with live artist Hester Reeve, choreographer Kate Sicchio and a/v noise artist xname. He also works with curator Karen Gaskill on the Sonic Pattern events, so far taking place in London, Sheffield and Kaunas.

Alex is behind the free/open source Tidal live coding environment, a language for pattern embedded in the Haskell programming language.

Alex is co-founder of the TOPLAP live coding organisation, the Algorave collective, the runme.org software art repository, and the Chordpunch algorithmic record label. His solo Peak Cut EP was released earlier this year on Sheffield label Computer Club.

FUTURE CONCERTS

Sunday 18th October

13:00-15:00

***Mikrophonie I* Workshop**

Led by Scott McLaughlin with Sean Williams.

Stockhausen's *Mikrophonie I* is a landmark work of avant-garde 'live electronic' music. In the piece, two performers play a large tam-tam gong, using a range of beaters, household objects, and other implements. Two performers have hand-held microphones, which they move around the tam-tam to amplify the sounds. Another two performers operate electronic equipment to transform the sounds. Come along, learn about the piece, and try out some of the techniques first-hand.

15:30-16:00

Preconcert Talk - Dr James Mooney

16:00-17:00

Steve Beresford and Phil Minton with Aleks Kolkowski and Sean Williams

Hugh Davies – *Birth of Live Electronic Music* for Stroh violin & acoustic mixer (1971)

Hugh Davies – *Voice* for solo vocalist and disc-cutting machine (1969)

Hugh Davies – *Not to be Loaded with Fish* for record player and electronics (1968-9)

Steve Beresford – *Voice* (1974)

plus solo and group improvisations

Sacconi Quartet and Friends

Friday 25 October, 3:00pm

The Sacconi Quartet are joined by two of this country's finest chamber musicians – violist Simon Rowland-Jones (Chilingirian Quartet) and cellist David Waterman (Endellion Quartet) – in a glorious programme of string music. Beginning with Strauss' sumptuous Sextet from his opera *Capriccio*, and culminating in Brahms' ever popular B flat Sextet, the programme also features a first for Leeds – the northern premiere of Simon Rowland-Jones' second string quintet, written for the Sacconis last year and delighting audiences wherever it is performed.

The award-winning Sacconi Quartet is recognised for its unanimous and compelling ensemble, consistently communicating with a fresh and imaginative approach. Formed in 2001, its four founder members continue to demonstrate a shared passion for string quartet repertoire, infectiously reaching out to audiences with their energy and enthusiasm.

Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall

Tickets: £20 / FREE – Students and Under 16s
