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9-11-2010

Here There Be Dragons

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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PROGRAM

Victoire	“Like a Miracle”
NOW Ensemble	“Velvet Hammer” (composed by Sean Friar)
Victoire	“Cathedral City”
<i>Television Landscape</i>	“Rio Rio”
<i>Television Landscape</i>	“Halcyon Days”
NOW Ensemble	“Awake” (composed by Patrick Burke)
Victoire	“A Door into the Dark”
<i>Television Landscape</i>	“Pegasus in Alcatraz”

~~Intermission~~

NOW Ensemble	“Burst” (composed by Mark Dancigers)
Victoire	“India Whiskey”
NOW Ensemble	“Change” (composed by Judd Greenstein)
<i>Television Landscape</i>	“Cheyenne Autumn/Spiritual Robot”
<i>Television Landscape</i>	“Television Landscape”
Victoire	“A Song for Mick Kelly”
<i>Television Landscape</i>	“The Color of Rain”
(with members of NOW Ensemble and Victoire)	

PROGRAM NOTES

We fear the unknown, and crave it. Ancient cartographers marked the yet-unexplored parts of their maps with florid drawings of real or mythical beasts, all imbued with danger. When words replaced images, they would read, often, “here there are lions” or, later and less commonly, “here there be dragons.” The places where danger was suggested—through lions on land, dragons at sea—were precisely the places that future explorers would seek out, erasing the mystery and dispelling the fear. But there were always new margins, new beasts of uncertainty, arising as the previous boundary was explored.

In an age of unprecedented collective knowledge, nearly all immediately available, where are the dragons? The kinds of knowing that our systems suggest—our systems of education, of technology, of government—all demand complete maps devoid of mystery and danger. A dragon, in our age of seeming omniscience, represents nothing more than failure, a glitch in the system, a bug to be addressed.

New Amsterdam Records supports artists who veer, naturally, toward the beasts of the map. Or, to go further, artists who create the beasts themselves, insisting on the presence of the new and the unknown in the face of a stagnant societal complacency. There can always be dragons, if we choose to see them there, or choose to not see what we’re told lies beneath.

Walk into a record store or go online to buy music, and behold the county lines, the borders of islands and inlets, that neatly tell

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

NOW Ensemble

Hailed as “a deft young group gaining attention” (Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*) and “a smart young chamber group that straddles a line between contemporary classical music and indie rock” (John Schaefer, WNYC), NOW Ensemble is a collection of performers and composers dedicated to making new chamber music for the 21st century. With a unique instrumentation of flute (Alex Sopp), clarinet (Sara Budde), electric guitar (Mark Dancigers), double bass (Logan Coale), and piano (Michael Mizrahi), NOW Ensemble brings a fresh sound and a new perspective to the classical tradition, infused with a blend of musical influences that reflects the diverse backgrounds and listening experiences of its members. NOW has premiered over 70 works, including those by composer-members Patrick Burke, Mark Dancigers, and Judd Greenstein, along with many more by a cross-section of the top young voices in contemporary composition, such as Ryan Brown, David T. Little, Missy Mazzoli, Nico Muhly, and dozens more.

NOW Ensemble has performed at a wide variety of venues, such as the Bang on a Can Marathon, the Festival Internacional de Chihuahua, Pittsburgh’s Music on the Edge, the Carlsbad Music Festival, Sarasota’s New Music New College, Wordless Music, and Look & Listen; in New York, the ensemble can regularly be heard at diverse venues such as Le Poisson Rouge, Joe’s Pub, Galapagos Art Space, and the Chelsea Art Museum as well as on WNYC radio. NOW Ensemble’s first album, *NOW*, was released in 2008 to rave reviews around the country, including on AllMusic.com (five stars): “a first-class debut...more of this is demanded, not requested.” *Newsweek*’s Seth Colter Walls wrote, “*NOW*... imports a catchy inflection to classical forms... Striking a balance between the old and the new has rarely sounded this good.”

William Britttelle’s Television Landscape

Born from the grand tradition of progressive conceptual albums like *Purple Rain*, *Dark Side of the Moon*, and *OK Computer*, yet fully and completely composed and notated, William Britttelle’s *Television Landscape* is an exciting and ambitious new entry in the Art Rock canon. Since the album’s release, it has been roundly praised by both classical and mainstream press outlets. *The New York Times* calls the project “...a riotous shotgun wedding of rich orchestrations and complex arrangements,” and the *Los Angeles Times* said the album was cause to “wonder if Jane’s Addiction had discovered the soul of

Debussy.” In a recent four-star record review, *Time Out New York* lauded *Television Landscape* as “...a glorious reclamation of lush sounds that crusty critics have vilified for years.” The project has also been featured extensively in mainstream music publications like *Filter*, *Alarm Magazine*, *The Awl*, and *BlackBook* magazine, as well as tastemaker blogs such as *Brooklyn Vegan*, *My Old Kentucky*, *Knox Road*, the KEXP blog, and *PopMatters*. Live, the project features a 10-person ensemble of some of New York City’s top mixed-genre performers from groups like Alarm Will Sound, NOW Ensemble, Respect Sextet, The Long Count, and Jerseyband. The result is an expansive palette of sound, mixing together a rock rhythm section, orchestral strings, virtuosic guitar solos, a jazz sax section, washes of vintage synthesizers and rich vocal harmonies, and late 1970s-style horn and flute riffs—all alongside Britttelle’s raw charisma and distinctive vocals.

The follow-up to William Britttelle’s well-received collage-based concept album *Mohair Time Warp* (2008), this new apocalyptic-yet-hopeful mixed-genre concept album sees Britttelle pushing musical boundaries even further by expressing his uniquely extensive experience with classical, jazz, and rock with brazen mastery. *Television Landscape* adheres to no limitations of style, genre, or instrumentation. Instead, it is a classically trained composer’s work to reconcile the disparity between the music he cherishes and the music he enjoys. Like the legendary albums that inspired it, Britttelle’s art-pop manifesto seeks a deep emotional connection with the audience. Threads of loneliness, environmental destruction, and redemption weave in and out, leading listeners on a vivid journey through the jagged edges of our modern age, pausing to find beauty and stillness among the shards of destruction.

Victoire

From the quirky, dark mind of composer/pianist Missy Mazzoli, recently deemed “one of the most surprising and inventive composers currently working in New York” (*The New York Times*), comes Victoire, a new chamber-rock ensemble that *Time Out New York* dubbed “an all-star, all-female quintet” and *Pitchfork* described as “so good...a pleasingly accessible entrée into the world of pseudo-classical music.” Victoire performs Mazzoli’s distinct blend of dreamy post-rock, idiosyncratic minimalism and rich romanticism. Grainy samples intertwine with clarinet and violin lines, accented by vintage keyboards and upright bass, striking a delicate balance between modern classical music and indie rock.

Since forming in 2008, Victoire has performed at many of New York’s top new music venues including Le Poisson Rouge, the Bang on a Can Marathon, Galapagos, the Tank, The Stone, and the Whitney Museum, as well as in Chicago’s Millennium Park for a crowd of 2,500 people. In spring of 2009, Victoire became the first classical artist to be featured on “eMusic.com Selects.” Victoire released its debut EP, *A Door into the Dark*, on eMusic.com in March 2009 and will release a full-length album, *Cathedral City*, with New Amsterdam Records in 2010. Upcoming appearances include performances at the Library of Congress’s series at the Atlas Theater in Washington, DC, the Southern Theater in Minneapolis, and the X Avant Festival at the Music Gallery in Toronto.

New Amsterdam Records

New Amsterdam Records is a nonprofit-model record label and artists’ service organization that supports the public’s engagement with new music by composers and performers whose work grows from the fertile ground between genres. New Amsterdam helps to spread the awareness of this music through the presentation of concerts and premiere commercial recordings of new compositions, written and performed by highly trained musicians with diverse musical backgrounds. Through these activities, New Amsterdam acts as a conduit between musicians and the public, promoting a wider awareness of these artists’ sophisticated, adventurous new music with an open embrace of the latest technological and cultural trends.

Over the past three years, New Amsterdam’s catalogue has grown to include nearly two dozen artists, including soloists and orchestras, small and large ensembles, big bands and rock bands, pop vocalists and opera singers. Far from crafting a label “sound,” this diverse catalogue reflects New Amsterdam’s commitment to supporting and nurturing projects that wholly fulfill the intent of their creators, disregarding existing genre norms and open to all influences from the entire world of music. This is music without filters, made by musicians who bring the breadth of their listening experience and the love they have for many different kinds of music into their own playing, writing, and producing. It is music without walls, without an agenda, and without a central organizing principle. New Amsterdam strives to develop as quickly and as broadly as the music itself, opening doors for artists to enter, creating new spaces for them to fill, and touching the outer edges where musics meet.

The critical response to this new model has been outstanding, with label and artist features on NPR’s *All Things Considered*, *Weekend Edition*, and *Studio 360*; in prominent print publications such as *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Alarm Magazine*, the *Village Voice*, and *Time Out New York*; and in tastemaker online magazines such as *The Awl*, *PopMatters*, *BlackBook*, *17dots*, the *Indie Handbook*, *textura*, and *NewMusicBox*, in addition to album reviews and write-ups in hundreds of publications worldwide. *Newsweek*’s Seth Colter Walls called New Amsterdam “an upstart label that’s been releasing one quality disc after another since its founding,” and the *Sunday New York Times* lauded the label’s first slate of releases in two separate year-end best-of articles. Through a distribution relationship with Naxos of America, as well as through its own online store and streaming “radio station,” New Amsterdam has brought new music to thousands of listeners in a wide variety of formats and platforms.

As a presenting organization, New Amsterdam has given over 40 concerts of groundbreaking new music, featuring world premieres, semistaged operas, record releases, special one-off shows, music festivals, and chamber music series. Highlights include 2009’s Undiscovered Islands series, a month of record releases and world premiere events, including Missy Mazzoli’s *Song from the Uproar* and Sarah Kirkland Snider’s *Penelope*, and the 2009–10 Archipelago series, a full season of new chamber music featuring, among others, Nadia Sirota, Roomful of Teeth, Tristan Perich, NOW Ensemble, Son Lux, Corey Dargel with the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), and Craig Wedren with the American Contemporary Music Ensemble (ACME). In early 2011, New Amsterdam will be an associate presenter of the Ecstatic Music Festival, presented by the Kaufman Center at New York’s acclaimed Merkin Hall. This unprecedented event will bring together artists with classical and nonclassical backgrounds for collaborative evenings that allow the participants to explore new musical territory (scheduled collaborations include Sō Percussion/Dan Deacon, Clogs/Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Nico Muhly/Valgeir Sigurðsson/Chiara String Quartet, and many more). As part of its ongoing programming, New Amsterdam has made a priority of forming partnerships with other like-minded organizations, including Cantaloupe Records (the label of Bang on a Can), MATA, Galapagos Art Space, Minneapolis’s Southern Theater, Nonclassical (UK), the Manhattan New Music Project, Search and Restore, and AMC’s Counterstream Radio.

Music

Music

Music

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President
 Dr. Geoffrey W. Newman, Dean, College of the Arts
 Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

Peak Performances @ Montclair presents:

Here There Be Dragons

NOW Ensemble

Sara Budde, clarinet
Patrick Burke, composer
Logan Coale, double bass
Mark Dancigers, composer, electric guitar
Judd Greenstein, composer, synthesizers
Michael Mizrahi, piano
Alex Sopp, flute

William Brittle's Television Landscape

Emily Brausa, cello
William Brittle, vocals, synthesizers, composer
Logan Coale, electric bass
Mark Dancigers, electric guitar
Alex Hamlin, baritone sax
Brook Martinez, drums
Ed Rosenberg, tenor sax
JP Schlegelmilch, piano
Mary Jo Stilp, violin
Virginia Warken, vocals

Victoire

Olivia De Prato, violin
Lorna Krier, keyboards
Eileen Mack, clarinet
Missy Mazzoli, composer, keyboards
Eleonore Oppenheim, double bass

Here There Be Dragons is a New Amsterdam Records production.

Duration: 1 hour 50 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission.

In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted inside the theater.

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Alexander Kasser Theater

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Here There Be Dragons

Featuring **NOW Ensemble**,
William Brittle's Television Landscape,
 and **Victoire**

September 11, 2010 • 8:00pm

Alexander Kasser Theater

Montclair State University