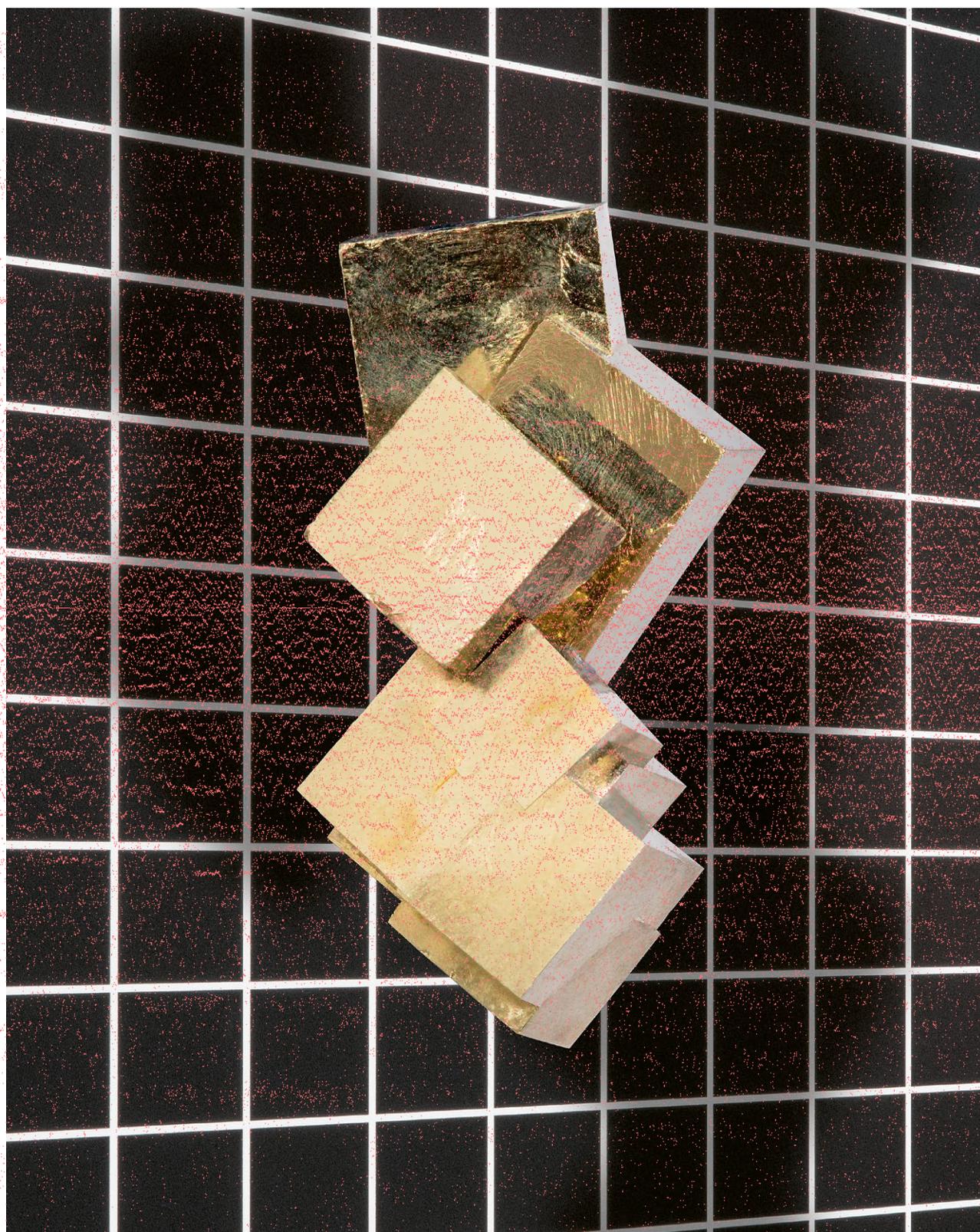


ultima

oslo contemporary
music festival

10–19 september 2015



on nature

programme

THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER

Ultima Remake
10:00 — Edvard Munch Secondary School
Interactive installation created by pupils
p. 13

Ultima Academy
Media theorist Wolfgang Ernst on online culture and the digital renaissance
16:00 — Kulturhuset
p. 14

John Persen *Mot Kalde Vinder*
16:00–22:00 — Outside Oslo Concert Hall
Installation
p. 6

Elisabeth Vatn *The Color Beneath* (WP)
18:30 — Ekeberg Park
(Also 11–13 September)
Sunrise and sunset concerts in James Turrell's installation
p. 14

Opening concert
Olivier Messiaen
Turangalila-Symphonie
Oslo Philharmonic
19:00 — Oslo Concert Hall
(Also 11 September)
Ecstatic modern orchestral masterpiece
p. 10

Nils Petter Molvær *Lucid Dream*
From 20:30 — Ekeberg Park
(Also 11–13 September)
Sound and light environment in Ekeberg Park
p. 12

FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

Installation opening
Quiet Ensemble *Quintetto*
10:00 — Teknisk museum
p. 19

Ultima Academy
Trond Reinholdtsen and Ole-Henrik Moe analyze *Turangalila*
11:00 — Loftet
p. 21

Lunchtime concert
Herrman Vogt
Concordia Discors, Études (WP)
12:00 — Loftet
Piano studies with Ian Pace, piano
p. 19

Installation opening and concert
Elin Mar Øyen Vister *Røster III* (WP)
15:00 — Deichmanske hovedbibliotek
p. 20

Installation opening
Terry Fox *The Labyrinth Scored for 11 Different Cats*
15:00 — Atelier Nord ANX
p. 19

Ultima Academy
Anders K. Krabberød's Short History of Biology
15:00 — Kulturhuset
p. 21

Ultima Academy
Biologist Dag essen on evolution and genetics
16:00 — Kulturhuset
p. 21

Matthew Shlomowitz (WP) / Alexander Schubert
Plus Minus Ensemble
17:00 — The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet
p. 15

Elisabeth Vatn *The Color Beneath*
18:30 — Ekeberg Park
(Also 12 and 13 September)
p. 14

Ultima Academy
Film night Luc Ferrari
18:30 — Kulturhuset
Composer Luc Ferrari, film portrait
p. 21

Olivier Messiaen
Turangalila-Symphonie
Oslo Philharmonic
19:00 — Oslo Concert Hall
p. 10

Henrik Hellstenius *Ørets teater III: Om naturen* (WP)
Oslo Sinfonietta / Dans les Arbres
19:30 — The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet, (Also 12 and 13 September)
Concert / performance
p. 16

Installation opening
Ali Paranadian *Untitled I, A Poem for Norway* (WP)
20:00 — Majorstuen Church
p. 20

Nils Petter Molvær *Lucid Dream*
From 20:30 — Ekeberg Park
p. 12

Cecilie Ore
Adam & Eve — A Divine Comedy
21:00 — Kulturkirken Jakob (Also 12 September)
Chamber opera about religion and hatred of women
p. 18

Double Vision + Amnesia Scanner
22:00 — Parkteatret
Atom™ and Robin Fox + Amnesia Scanner
p. 17

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

Koka Nikoladze *Sound Stencil 0.1* (WP)
12:00 — Starts at Dansens Hus
Oslo as a drumming machine
p. 30

Ultima Academy
Psychologist Bruno Laeng on synaesthesia
12:00 — Kulturhuset
p. 31

Ultima Academy
Neurobiologist Semir Zeki on aesthetics of Neurobiology
13:00 — Kulturhuset
p. 31

Små Grå and Kim Hiorthøy *Kjemi* (WP)
13:00 — Teatersalen, Bondeungdomslaget i Oslo
(Also 13 September)
Performance / concert
p. 22

Ultima Academy
Alexander Schubert in conversation with rob Young
14:00 — Kulturhuset
p. 31

Ultima Academy
Music Professor Rolf Inge Godøy on sound and gesture
14:30 — Kulturhuset
p. 31

James Dillon / Jon Øivind Ness
Cikada
15:00 — Parkteatret
Chamber works
p. 23

Helge Sten (WP) / Harry Partch / Simon Steen-Andersen
Ensemble Musikfabrik
18:00 — Kanonhallen
New work by Deathprod for Partch's legendary instruments
p. 24

Elisabeth Vatn *The Color Beneath*
18:30 — Ekeberg Park
p. 14

Henrik Hellstenius
Ørets teater III: Om naturen
Oslo Sinfonietta / Dans les Arbres
18:30 — The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet
(Also 13 September)
p. 16

Heine Avdal & Yukiko Shinozaki
Distant Voices
19:00 — Black Box Teater
(Also 13 September)
Dance performance
p. 24

Anders Tveit & Parallax
Parallax View (WP)
20:00 — Deichmanske bibliotek (Gründerløkka branch)
Live sound installation
p. 30

Nils Petter Molvær *Lucid Dream*
From 20:30 — Ekeberg Park
p. 12

Jan Martens *The Dog Days Are Over*
21:00 — Dansens Hus
(Also 13 September)
Dance performance
p. 26

Cecilie Ore
Adam & Eve — A Divine Comedy
21:00 — Kulturkirken Jakob
p. 18

Robert Ashley *Perfect Lives*
Matmos
22:00 — Vulkan Arena
American electronica duo perform celebrated TV opera
p. 27

SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

Elisabeth Vatn *The Color Beneath*
06:00 — Ekeberg Park
(also 18:30)
p. 14

Children's Ultima Day (BUD)
11:00 — Riksscenen
A packed day of activities for the whole family
p. 32

Små Grå & Kim Hiorthøy *Kjemi*
13:00 — Teatersalen, Bondeungdomslaget i Oslo
p. 22

Kurt Schwitters Day
13:00 — Henie Onstad Arts Centre
Celebrating the doyen of dada with Building Instrument (WP), et al
p. 33

Camille Norment (WP)
18:00 — OCA
Camille Norment Trio, David Toop, Sofia Jernberg and Vocal Ensemble Oslo 14
Pre-talk 17:00
p. 34

Henrik Hellstenius *Ørets teater III: Om naturen*
Oslo Sinfonietta / Dans les Arbres
18:30 — The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet
p. 16

Elisabeth Vatn *The Color Beneath*
18:30 — Ekeberg Park
p. 14

Heine Avdal og Yukiko Shinozaki
Distant Voices
19:00 — Black Box Teater
p. 24

Ultima Academy
Geologist Henrik H. Svensen on issues in the Age of Man
19:30 — Kulturhuset
p. 35

Ultima Academy
Musicologist Richard Taruskin on birdsong, music and the supernatural
20:30 — Kulturhuset
p. 35

Nils Petter Molvær *Lucid Dream*
From 20:30 — Ekeberg Park
p. 12

Jan Martens *The Dog Days Are Over*
21:00 — Dansens Hus
p. 26

Ultima Academy
David Toop in conversation with Heloisa Amaral
21:30 — Kulturhuset
p. 35

MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

Lunchtime concert
Pinquins & SISU
12:00 — Loftet
Chamber works
p. 37

Knut Olaf Sunde *Comfort Music* (WP)
Ensemble Aksion
18:00 — Vulkan Arena
Concert installation
p. 36

Mathias Spahlinger (WP) / Øyvind Torvund
Ensemble asamisimasa
20:00 — Kulturkirken Jakob
Premiere and launch Torvund's new CD
p. 37

TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER

Lunchtime concert
Trio ClariNord
12:00 — Loftet
Chamber works
p. 39

Eivind Buene
The Norwegian Chamber Orchestra
19:00 — Universitetets aula
New music by Eivind Buene, plus the pieces that inspired it
p. 38

David Toop *Of Leonardo da Vinci — Quills / a Black Giant / Deluge* (WP)
Elaine Mitchener / David Toop
21:00 — Nasjonal jazzscene
One-woman multimedia opera
p. 39

WEDNESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER

Lunchtime concert
Microtub
12:00 — Loftet
Microtonal tuba trio
p. 45

François Bonnet Live Jukebox
15:00 — *nyMusikk*
Illustrated talk on the history of Groupe de Recherches Musicales (GRM)
p. 45

Gérard Grisey *Le Noir de l'Etoile*
Pinquins & SISU
19:00 — Kulturkirken Jakob
Percussion work of astronomical dimensions
p. 40

INA GRM
21:00 — Vulkan Arena
Musique concrète
p. 44

THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

Lunchtime concert
Gobi Drab
12:00 — Loftet
Recorderplayer performs Ansgar Beste and her own music
p. 48

SOFA Records' 15th anniversary
19:00 — Nasjonal jazzscene
Concert and launch of new CD
p. 46

Georg Friedrich Haas *In Vain*
Ensemble Ernst
21:00 — Riksscenen
Spellbinding piece described as 'an optical illusion for the ear'"
p. 47

James Hoff / Afrikan Sciences / Hilde Holsen
22:00 — Blå
PAN Records label and more
p. 48

FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

Lunchtime concert
Frevo Gitar duo
12:00 — Loftet
Guitar duo premiere new works
p. 51

Zwerm
18:00 — Norwegian Adacemy of Music
Levinsalen
w / Anders Førisdal
Microtonal electric guitar
p. 52

Annie Dorsen *Yesterday Tomorrow*
19:00 — Black Box Teater
(Also 19 September)
Evolutionary musical
p. 49

Anna Thorvaldsdottir *UR*.
19:30 — The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet
(Also 19 September)
New opera by Icelandic composer set in Greenland
Pre-talk at 18:00
p. 50

Ang
20:00 — Riksscenen
Harding fiddle performance
p. 49

Trond Reinholdtsen *Ø* (WP)
22:00 — Venue will be announced at ultima.no
Film screening and performance
p. 52

SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER

Edvin Østergaard (WP) / Jan Erik Mikalsen (WP) / Maja Linderøth
The Norwegian Soloists' Choir
13:00 — Universitetets gamle festival
p. 53

Øyvind Torvund (WP) / Jon Øivind Ness (WP) / Iannis Xenakis
KORK
15:00 — Universitetets aula
p. 54

Annie Dorsen *Yesterday Tomorrow*
18:00 — Black Box Teater
p. 49

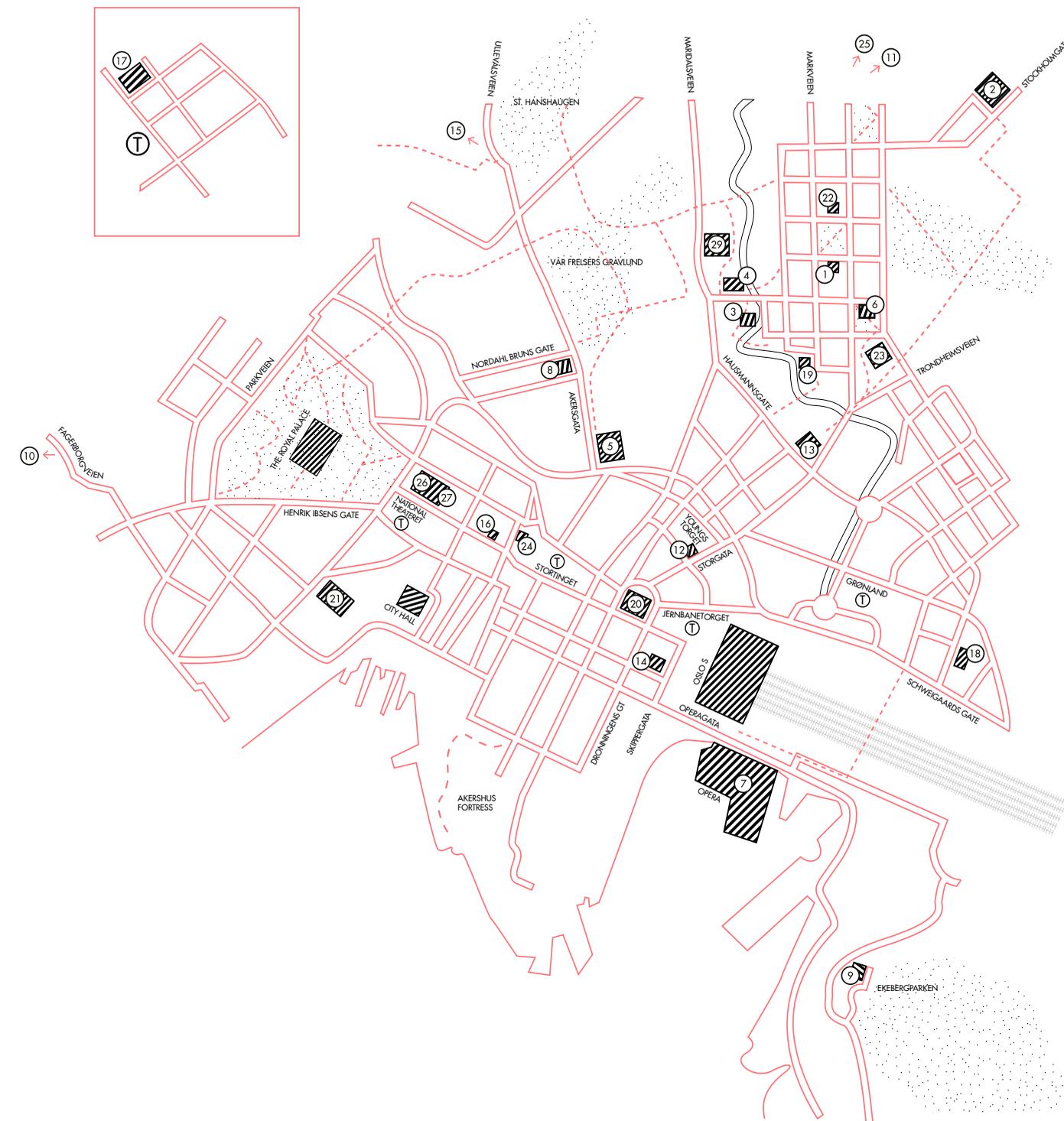
Anna Thorvaldsdottir *UR*.
18:30 — The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet
p. 50

Mia Habib *A song to ...*
19:00 — Dansens Hus
(Also 20 and 21 September)
Dance performance
p. 57

Ultima Finale
Arvo Pärt
André Bratten / Ole-Henrik Moe (WP)
Oslo Domkor & Ensemble Allegria
20:00 — Oslo Cathedral
p. 58

1. **ATELIER NORD ANX**
Olaf Ryes plass 2, 0552 Oslo
www.ateliernord.no
2. **BLACK BOX TEATER**
Marstrandgata 8, 0566 Oslo
www.blackbox.no
3. **BLÅ**
Brenneriveien 9, 0182 Oslo
www.blaaoslo.no
4. **DANSENS HUS**
Møllerveien 2, 0182 Oslo
www.dansenshus.com
5. **DEICHMANSKE BIBLIOTEK**
Arne Garborgs plass 4, 0179 Oslo
www.deichman.no
6. **DEICHMANSKE BIBLIOTEK AVD GRÜNERLØKKA**
Schous plass 10, 0552 Oslo
www.deichman.no/filial/grunerlokka
7. **DEN NORSKE OPERA & BALLETT**
Kirsten Flagstads plass 1, 0150 Oslo
www.operaten.no
8. **EDVARD MUNCH SECONDARY SCHOOL**
Ullevålsveien 5, 0165 Oslo
www.edvardmunch.vgs.no
9. **EKEBERG PARK**
Kongsveien 23, 0193 Oslo
www.ekebergparken.com
10. **HENIE ONSTAD ARTS CENTER**
Sonja Henies vei 31, 1311 Høvikodden
www.hok.no
11. **KANONHALLEN**
Peter Møllers vei 2, 0585 Oslo
www.kanonhallen.no
12. **KULTURHUSET**
Youngstorget 3, 0181 Oslo
www.kulturhusetioslo.no
13. **KULTURKIRKEN JAKOB (JAKOB CHURCH OF CULTURE)**
Hausmanns gate 14, 0182 Oslo
www.jakob.no
14. **LOFTET**
Skippergata 22, 0153 Oslo
www.sparebankstiftelsen.no/Sentralen
15. **MAJORSTUEN CHURCH, KAPELLET**
Kirkeveien 84, 0364 Oslo
www.oslo.kirken.no/majorstuen

16. **NASJONAL JAZZSCENE**
Karl Johans gate 35, 0162 Oslo
www.nasjonalljazzscene.no
17. **NORWEGIAN ACADEMY OF MUSIC (NMH)**
Slemdalsveien 11, 0363 Oslo
www.nrmh.no
18. **NY MUSIKK**
Platousgt. 18, 0190 Oslo
www.nymusikk.no
19. **OCA**
The Office for Contemporary Art Norway
Nedre gate 7, 0551 Oslo
www.oca.no
20. **OSLO CATHEDRAL**
Karl Johansgate 11, 0154 Oslo
www.oslodomkirke.no
21. **OSLO CONCERT HALL**
Munkedamsveien 14, 0115 Oslo
www.oslokonserthus.no
22. **PARKTEATRET**
Olaf Ryes plass 11, 0552 Oslo
www.parkteatret.no
23. **RIKSSCENEN**
Trondheimsveien 2, 0560 Oslo
www.riksscenen.no
24. **TEATERSALEN, BONDEUNGDOMSLAGET I OSLO**
Rosenkrantzgt 8, 0159 Oslo
www.bul.no
25. **TEKNISK MUSEUM**
Kjelsåsveien 143, 0491 Oslo
www.tekniskmuseum.no
26. **UNIVERSITETETS AULA**
Karl Johans gate 47, 0162 Oslo
www.uio.no/om/kultur/aulaen/
27. **UNIVERSITETETS GAMLE FESTSAL**
Karl Johans gate 47, 0162 Oslo
www.uio.no/om/finn-fram/omrader/sentrum/seo2/
28. **VULKAN ARENA**
Maridalsveien 13 b, 0178 Oslo
www.vulkanarena.no



Tickets

Billettservice sells tickets for most concerts which do not have free entry. www.billettservice.no. Tel 815 33 133.

Tickets purchased from Billettservice can be collected from Posten, Post i butikk, Narvesen or 7Eleven. Tickets may also be purchased on the door at each individual event.

Also find links to buy tickets at www.ultima.no.

For ticket prices, see details accompanying each event. Full price is stated first, followed by discounts for students OAPs and unemployed.

NB! Sold out!
Arrive in good time, as events can sell out.

We advise collecting tickets in advance and turning up early as concerts will begin on time.

Nature and human beings



Photo Ultima / Henrik Beck (m)

Music is closely related to the natural sciences, both in the way it's conceived and perceived. Ever since the Stone Age, physics, psychology, astronomy and biology have inspired humans to create music, just as they do today.

Whether it's technological inventions that enable us to explore acoustic principles, psycho-acoustic research, the overwhelming grandeur of space, speculations about mankind's place and function in the cosmos, or simply a majestic elk in the sunset: Man's encounter with nature is the starting point for reflection and wonderment – and art plays an important part in that.

This year's Ultima Festival is the twenty-fifth in a row, so we've searched the

archives and sifted through programmes and other documentation, starting with the very first festival in 1991. This has resulted in an anniversary book, *Ultima 25*, being published to coincide with the opening of the festival.

There have been so many changes in the world over the last twenty-five years, which are naturally reflected in a festival determined to present new musical trends and ideas. While many things are different in comparison with the launch year of 1991, Ultima had both the intent and the means to change from its very outset. Ultima has been opposition as well as institution, avant-garde and tradition, local and international, light-hearted and hard-hitting, beloved and despised. Few

music festivals, if any at all, can look back at this kind of diversity and breadth in musical genres and formats throughout a quarter century.

Thanks are due to so many people. Seventeen institutions constitute the Ultima organization, and each year they contribute with resources and know-how that provide the means for an top-tier international festival. Their contributions are invaluable. But they are not alone. In the midst of Ultima's history there is a bunch of wonderful people. Hard-working people who know how to think out of the box, talented, sensitive and strong people, knowledgeable, funny and critical, all at once. Be it the performers and composers from all over the world,

producers, managers, volunteers, writers, or our enthusiastic audiences. Each of them make up Ultima's backbone. These people invest hours and hours of work to fulfil their dreams and musical ambitions, in most case without any monetary return or glamour. As I've been thumbing through the festival programmes from the last twenty-five years, I have been struck by an insight: More than anything else, Ultima has been a celebration of the individual, of humanity in all its nuances.

John Persen, the first leader of Ultima, died on 12 December 2014. This is what Halvor Fjermeros writes about him in *Norsk biografisk leksikon*: 'When a journalist reminded Persen of an interview from the 1970s where he had characterized [the Marxist folk-group] Vømmøl Spellemannslag as one of the most reactionary aspects of Norway, he said: "Whatever political strength music has is embedded in its ability to form a new consciousness, open new doors of insight, not in singing songs or painting pictures that only serve to reassure the left. Art cannot change the world. It can only change the people who contribute to change in the world".'

Ever restless, John Persen left a profound mark in Norway's art world. He was essential to Ultima as well. Thus, we are pleased to present the first Norwegian performance of his work *Mot Kalde Vinder (Against Cold Winds)* as part of the opening of this year's Ultima festival.

After the success of the first festival in 1991, *Aftenposten's* critic Idar Karevold wrote, '... to have any effect, an effort within this field has to be constant. In the pursuit of art, there is no such thing as a golden apple, a one-time prize. Only unending perseverance will lead to results. It's the endurance that counts.'

We look forward to the road ahead.

Official festival magazine
Ultima Oslo Contemporary
Music Festival
10.–19. september 2015

Editor-in-chief
Lars Petter Hagen

Editors
Cathrine Nysæther and Rob Young

Contributors
Heloisa Amaral, Henrik Beck (foto), Bernie Krause, Cathrine Nysæther, Brigid McCauley (oversettelse), André Savik (oversettelse), Rob Young, Sebastian Wemmerlov, Ando Woltmann og Maren Ørstavik

Design
NODE Berlin Oslo
www.nodeoslo.com

Cover photo
Jonas Marguet

Ultima Oslo Contemporary Music
Festival

Address
Skippergata 22, 0154 Oslo

Post address
c/o Sentralen, Pb 183 Sentrum,
0102 Oslo

E-mail
info@ultima.no

Print
TS Trykk

This magazine is published with
support from Fritt Ord

His Royal Highness Crown Prince
Haakon is the patron of Ultima



Find us on-line
www.ultima.no
Facebook—
www.facebook.com/ultimaoslo
Twitter—@ultimaoslo
Instagram—@ultimafestivalen

Program advisory board
Per Boye Hansen,
Anne Hilde Neset, Thomas Schäfer
og Mattis With

Ultima's members
BIT20 Ensemble
Black Box Teater
Den Norske Opera & Ballett
Det Norske Kammerorkester
Det Norske Solistkor
Henie Onstad kunstsenter
Institutt for musikkvitenskap, UiO
Kringkastingsorkesteret, NRK
Kunsthogskolen i Oslo
NICEM
Norges musikkhogskole
Norsk Komponistforening
NOTAM
nyMusikk
Oslo Domkor
Oslo-Filharmonien
Oslo Sinfonietta og Cikada

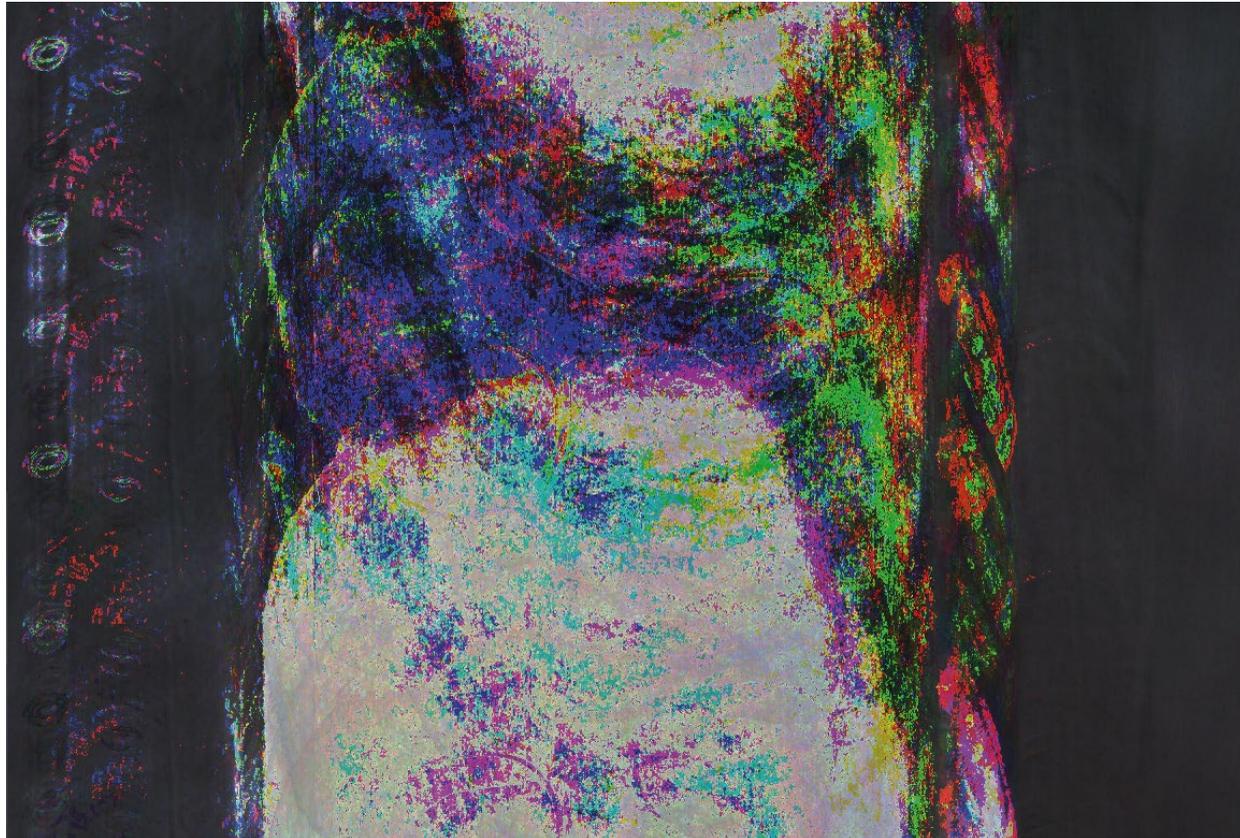
Ultima is supported by



Ultima thanks

Atelier Nord ANX
Blå
Core Production
Dansens Hus
Deichmanske hovedbibliotek
Deichmanske bibliotek avd.
Grünerløkka
Det Norske komponistfond
Dextra Musica
Drivhuset
Dronebygg
Edvard Munch videregående skole
EGD
Ekebergparken AS
Far North
Fond for lyd og bilde
Fond for utøvende kunstnere
Grappa
Kunststiftung NRW
(Arts Foundation of North
Rhine-Westphalia)
Institusjonen Fritt Ord
Kanonhallen
Komponistfondet
Komponistenes vederlagsfond
Kulturdepartementet
Kulturhuset
Kulturkirken Jakob
Kulturkontakt Nord
Kunsthøvet
Majorstua +
Majorstuen kirke
MFOs Vederlagsfond
Morgenbladet
Music Norway
Nasjonal jazzscene
NATT&DAG
NODE Berlin Oslo
Nordisk Kulturfond
Norsk kulturfond
Norsk kulturråd
OCA,
Office for Contemporary Art
Norway
Oslo domkirke
Oslo kommune
Oslo Konserthus
Oslo kulturmatt
Parkteatret
Popsenteret
Riksscenen
Scandic Hotels
Sentralen
SOFA record label
Sparebankstiftelsen DNB
Teatersalen,
Bondeungdomslaget i Oslo
Teknisk museum
Universitetets aula
Universitetets gamle festsal
Utenriksdepartementet
Vulkan Arena
Westerdals Oslo School of Arts,
Communication
and Technology

Mot Kalde Vinder
John Persen



John Persen *Mot Kalde Vinder* (installation)

Outside Oslo Konserthus
4–10pm
Free

On the occasion of Ultima 2015, Grappa is releasing an album of John Persen's electronic music. Jøran Rudi (researcher at Notam and former guitar player with Kjøtt) says this about his cooperation with Persen:

'I had just bought an eight track tape recorder, a four voice Korg MonoPoly synthesizer and a Roland TR-808 drum

machine. John Persen had a brand new Roland Jupiter 6 and a tape echo device. Together with a huge AKG reverb unit we had on loan, these were the instruments we used for our compositions. John and I sat side by side for nearly two years, created sounds and composed according to detailed drawings and strict rules of arithmetic. In 1984, I went to the United States to study composition while John created the work *Mot Kalde Vinder* (*Against Cold Winds*, 1985).

John always composed for instruments of some sort, but on this occasion they were electronic. The tonal foundation he used in his electronic music makes the parallel to his orchestral works easily discernible, but the electronic tools

enabled him to articulate the musical space and distance more dynamically. *Mot Kalde Vinder* was conceived as a six hour concert, leaving people free to arrive and depart whenever they wanted. This piece has never been performed in Norway the way he had envisioned, but some attempts have been made. When Black Box Teater planned a performance, Persen wanted 1300 lit tealights in the venue, but the fire department put its foot down, so John did the same. He also tried to get to use the dig on the construction site for the new central bank building, got in contact with the municipal harbour authority and public transport company, but to no avail. There was no place to have the work performed in 1985.'

Ultima 2015: On Nature

Rob Young

Around 2000, environmental scientists began speculating that the earth had entered a new geological era, one they called the Anthropocene. This means that human activity around the planet is now influencing every aspect of the Earth as much as the forces of nature have done for billions of years. Almost all of Earth's ecosystems now bear the marks of human presence and alteration.

Is this a natural process, caused by the most intelligent, creative and destructive mammal on the planet? Or is it a movement beyond nature into conditions irreversibly unnatural? It's too early to tell, but it's certain that some things can no longer be taken for granted about nature.

What does this have to do with music, and specifically a contemporary music festival in northern Europe?

Thinking about one distinct age of humanity reminds us, soberingly, that our tenure on the planet is a historical blip. There have been many ages of Earth, each lasting millions of year, and there will be human-free eras in the future. In the light of this knowledge, how can art represent concepts that hold true for all the geological ages of Earth, not just our own? In this context the idea of an art form governed by natural laws, not only human emotions, begins to make sense.

Music is precisely such an art form. Strip it back to its elements, beyond the popular tune, the great symphonic development, the tribal beat hammered on a log, and it's an acoustical system with properties governed by the physics of the universe. When any music – from Bach to Stockhausen – aspires to the 'cosmic', it takes its structure and organising principles from nature's arithmetic. It can move or even awe us in profound ways, but it is not the same type of experience as a work of romantic self-expression.

The music of composers such as Robert Ashley, Herman Vogt, James Dillon and Mathias Spahlinger, or the choreography of Jan Martens, often employs systems or set of laws which must be followed. It could be as simple as giving two people a pattern of hand clapping they must follow, or two electronic pulses that oscillate in and out of synchronisation. The outcomes of such systems may be either predictable or unpredictable. Composers don't 'write', with all the pre-determination that implies, but create conditions in which sonic results may grow and change. It's almost more helpful to think of it as gardening or land cultivation than composing in the traditional sense.

But systems can become far more complex. Gerard Grisey's massive percussion work *Le Noir de l'étoile* (1990) emulates the repetitive signals from pulsars, the dense residues of long-dead supernovas whose pulsations are some of the most ancient audible patterns in the universe. The six percussionists of Pinguins will surround the audience, placing them

at the gravitational centre of a sonic black hole. Audience and performers are literally plunged into the black during Georg Friedrich Haas's *In Vain* (2000), a deeply searching examination of hope and futility where, in the words of critic Alex Ross, 'a new kind of beauty seems ready to come into the world, but in the light of day it falters, and we end up back where we started'.

We often think of science and nature as opposed, even as mutual enemies. But Renaissance education placed music alongside mathematics, geometry and astronomy, part of the 'quadrivium' of natural sciences. Study of the fundamental laws of nature lay at the core of civilisation's knowledge, and music, with its harmonic ratios and precise mathematical correspondences between combinations of notes, as well as its existence in time and (acoustic) space.

In 2015, as we float in the backwash from a century of atonal revolutions in contemporary music and attempt to see where things are heading next, there are plenty of musicians and composers concerned with similar curiosity about music and its relationship with natural laws. On top of that, there are developments in neuroscience, with increasing understanding of how music affects the brain. Composers such as Matthew Shlomowitz, Mathias Spahlinger, Alexander Schubert, Robin Fox and others play with extreme audio-visual stimulation, synaesthesia, or devise ways for neural electricity to affect the outcome of music. And as the full implications of the Anthropocene become clearer, there is the environmental and ecological aspect of nature to consider. The scenario in *UR_*, a new opera by Anna Thorvaldsdottir, features the last survivors of the human race clustering together at the melting Greenland ice cap. Conservation extends into the realm of musical languages and tools, also: the extraordinary percussive music of American Harry Partch was made for a unique set of instruments to his own design. Without expensive and complex conservation programmes such as that one carried out by Ensemble Musikfabrik, who have built an entirely new set of these endangered instruments, Partch's music would eventually become as extinct as the dodo.

Composers can still celebrate the marvels of being in nature itself. In *Lucid Dream*, Nils Petter Molvær will send wanderers into the sculpture park at Ekeberg through a wondrous forest landscape transfigured by light, colour and sound. Nature permeates Øyvind Torvund's music in numerous ways – he has previously copied the song of birds and used antique nature engravings as a visual accompaniment. His new commission *Idyllic Scenes/Nightlife* imagines 'the 'origins of music', with primal organic sounds rising from the depths of nature, gradually cultivated as they are shaped into phrases and melodies.' Jon Øivind Ness, who has two pieces performed this year, often

titles his works with the strange names of remote forests and lakes around Oslo such as *Gimilen* where he likes to hike. These are echoes of the way nature – in the limited sense of the picturesque or frightening landscape – has always been a major inspiration for music right back to the classical era of Haydn's *Seasons* and Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*.

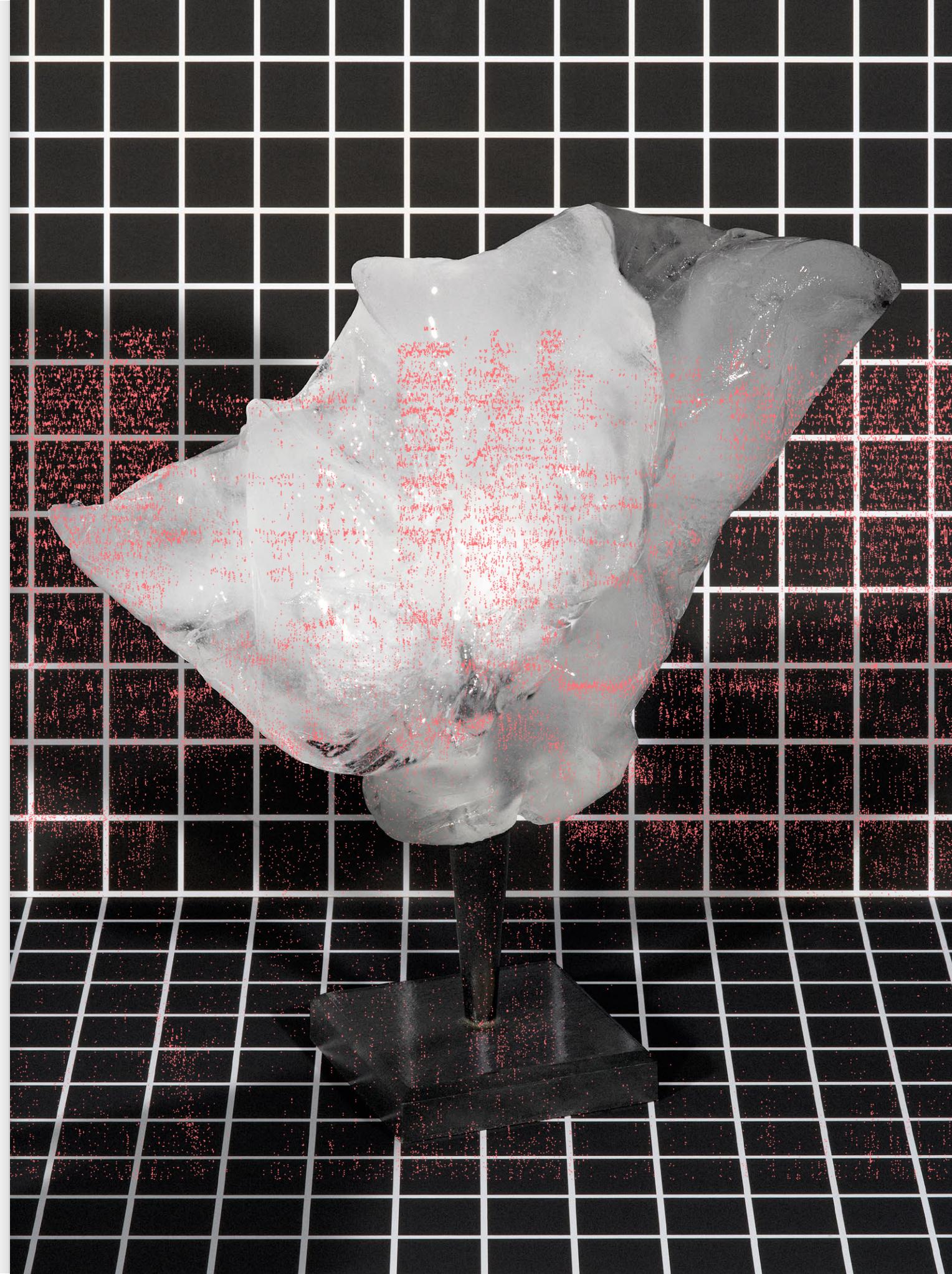
The biologist Roger Payne, whose album of underwater recordings, *The Song of the Humpback Whale*, was a surprise new age hit when it was released in 1970, believed whales had evolved a musical syntax as intricate as the most advanced human music. The microphone and the recorder have extended the human ear into the domain of nature as never before. American electronic duo Matmos, who perform Robert Ashley's TV opera *Perfect Lives* (1978–83) in Oslo, included the sounds of 'crayfish neural tissue' in their earliest recordings. Pierre Schaeffer, pioneer of *musique concrète* in the late 1940s, was the first to perceive how the sounds of objects, natural sounds and speech could be used as a new musical syntax and alphabet. Once this sound barrier had been broken, the floodgates were open to a mass of music making in composition, sound art and various forms of popular music, utilising found sounds. The direct continuation of Schaeffer's research, including Bernard Parmegiani's *De Natura Sonorum* (1975) and Luc Ferrari's *Presque Rien ou Le lever du jour au bord de la mer* (1967–1970, a piece comprising the noises of a seaside village at sunrise), are celebrated in an Ultima evening of masterworks by and inspired by the GRM (Groupe de Recherche Musicales). Projects like Koka Nikoladze's *Sound Stencil*, or Jan Martens's *The Dog Days Are Over*, focus on the noise potential of the human body itself. When British music writer and composer David Toop – who presents two pieces at Ultima 2015 – titled his 1995 book *Ocean of Sound*, the watery reference was highly appropriate. The musical landscape we now inhabit is a vast, interconnected, organic ecosystem.

Toop's vocal work, *Of Leonardo da Vinci*, is inspired by the inner life of the individual for whom the term 'Renaissance man' was intended. Leonardo's frame of reference included the visual arts, music, and the physical and natural sciences, and in his consuming quest for total knowledge, he drew no distinction between the two. Today Leonardo has given his name to America's leading journal of computer music, but he remains a key example of how the artistic spirit could fuse with the rational scientific mind.

The shared ground between artists, listeners, scientists, religious people is, as the American poet, thinker and medical researcher Lewis Thomas (a twentieth-century Renaissance man if ever there was one) pointed out, bewilderment. We don't know all the answers, but we continually approach them, hammering at the door of ignorance either by pushing at the limits of artistic expression, or devising new scientific methods and tools to examine the universe. Looking back at the multiple earthquakes that shook the contemporary music world during the entire 20th century, French composer Olivier Messiaen stands rock solid among the rubble, as one of modernism's most individual voices and towering presences. He could load a single piece of music with cosmic wonder, birdsong, sexual ecstasy and a restless harmonic and rhythmic energy. His music, and particularly the gigantic *Turangalila-Symphonie* (1949), which opens Ultima 2015, truly connects the earth's

deepest canyons with the most distant stars, the earthbound and the divine. Bird calls were, for the composer who lived to transcribe them, songs handed down from unimaginable antiquity, a manifestation of the original divine creation. Like the Wunderkammer collectors of the baroque, Messiaen held the marvels of nature to be the creator's gifts to humanity – visible proofs of a higher power – and celebrated them in a musical language that remains unmatched.

We all recognise the use of feedback in music and noise production: capturing the instant where a signal is fed back into its amplified output with effects that are difficult, but not impossible, to control. Nature itself, and the complex systems that make the planet function, are also dependent on multiple feedback loops. When these loops are upset – when there is too much noise in the system – we see the changes to the climate that are currently throwing Gaia's rhythms out of sync. As we have seen, music can be an audible filter of nature's structures and patterns. But nature's own orchestra is increasingly conducted by mankind.



Turangalīla-Symphonie

Olivier Messiaen / Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra

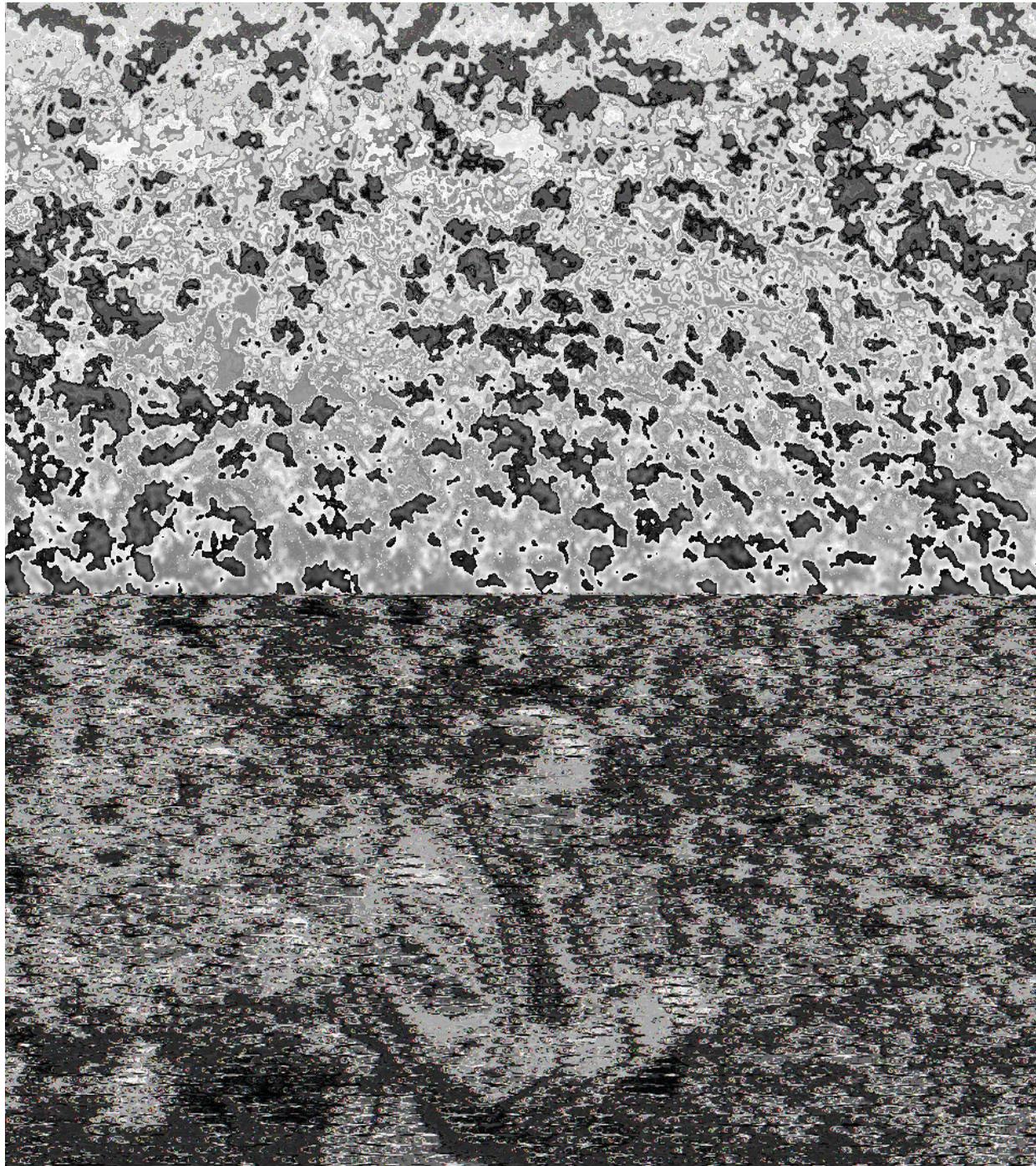


Photo Edouard Boubat (m)

Olivier Messiaen *Turangalīla-Symphonie*

Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra
 Conductor Vasily Petrenko
 Piano Steven Osborne
 Ondes Martenot Cynthia Millar

Oslo Konserthus
 7pm
 kr. 450 / 150,-

Also 11 September

‘The *Turangalīla-Symphonie* is a love song. It is also a hymn to joy. Not the respectable, calmly euphoric joy of some good man of the 17th century, but joy as it may be conceived by someone who has glimpsed it only in the midst of sadness, that is to say, a joy that is superhuman, overflowing, blinding, unlimited.’

Late in life, French composer Olivier Messiaen (1908–92) recalled the late 1940s as the period when his creative powers were invincible: When love and death, nature-worship, erotic ecstasy and religious devotion found equal weight in his rapidly developing oeuvre. In Messiaen, described as the ‘atomic bomb of contemporary music’ by Virgil Thomson, there is the sense of fervent Catholic faith meeting the age of the radio telescope and the atomic microscope head on, and an incredible, bewildering sound world emerging from the clash.

The *Turangalīla-Symphonie*, a master work of twentieth century music, was commissioned by Serge Koussevitsky for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, with the loose instructions: ‘Choose as many instruments as you desire, write a work as long as you wish, and in the style you want’. He seized the opportunity to make a colossal work, one that would contain all his transcendent religious visions, his obsession with birdsong, his interest in non-Western scales and timbres, and his

fascination with time and rhythm. Above all it would be an ecstatic wordless song of joy. The title itself derived from Messiaen’s interest in ancient Sanskrit: ‘turanga has a sense analogous to our use of tempo’, he said, ‘while līla refers to the life-force, the game of creation, rhythm and movement.’

The symphony took two and half years to write and was premiered in December 1949 in Boston, under the baton of Leonard Bernstein. The final version last around 75 minutes across ten movements, all of which move through an extraordinary range of fast, slow, agitated and calm motion. Within its giant architecture, interlocking themes and motifs connect and diverge, especially ‘the Statue’ (seven massive brass chords), ‘the Flower’ (a gentler theme in), and ‘Love’, which appears in many guises throughout the piece.

Each movement has a distinct character, from percussion assaults intended to terrify, to the rapturous cosmic lovers’ dance of the fifth, *Joie du sang des étoiles* (*Joy in the blood of stars*). Trilling bird-song on piano – suggesting the ‘oiseaux exotiques’ of another Messiaen title – glide about in the languid, pastoral interlude *Le jardin du sommeil d’amour*. Three ‘Turangalīla’ movements are interspersed among the others, mostly slow or medium paced, with highly complex rhythmic patterns showcasing the orchestra’s impressive arsenal of percussion. As if that wasn’t enough, the work also features the futuristic sounds of the early electronic instrument, the ondes Martenot, swooping and soaring in and around the composition’s vast peaks and troughs.

So *Turangalīla* is a work standing at the crossing of tradition and modernity, connecting the natural world with superhuman, dazzling and abandoned emotions, using a mix of primitive and sophisticated musical technology. These reflected the contradictions in Messiaen’s own nature, a man who loved the logic of numbers and rigorous harmonic theory while romantically inclined towards love, death,

God and the irrational. When those competing factors, were at war with himself, he said, ‘In melancholy moments, when my uselessness is brutally revealed to me, [...] what else is there to do except search for the true face of Nature, forgotten somewhere in the forest, in the fields, in the mountains, on the seashore, among the birds?’

As Ultima’s opening concert, the *Turangalīla-Symphonie* evokes many facets of the complex totality we call Nature – in this case, an unconstrained Nature created and overseen by a god that demands nothing less than passionate, all-consuming devotion. RY

In collaboration with Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra

Light design—Daniel Sørensen

Dreams in the forest

Nils Petter Molvær

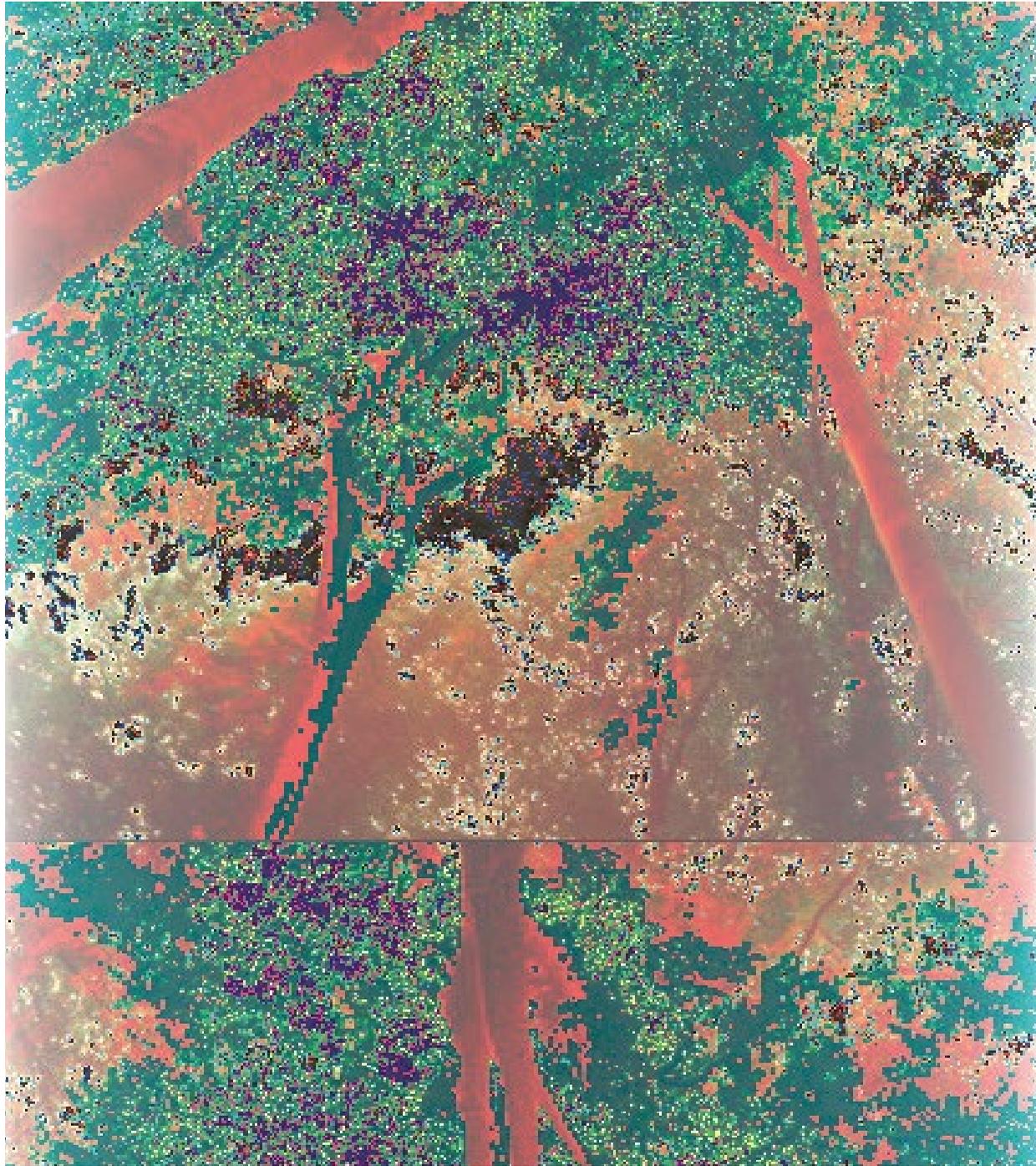


Photo Susanne Diesner (m)

Nils Petter Molvær *Lucid Dream*

Ekeberg Park
8:30pm–00:30
Free admission NB: Limited tickets available
at Billettservice.no

From 10–13 September 2015.

Lucid dreaming is a phenomenon where you are aware of the fact that you are dreaming, a kind of hyperreal state which many liken to a spiritual experience. This year Ultima invites the audience to take part in a physical dream experiment in Ekeberg Park, in which sound and light will create outer and inner images – set to the music of Nils Petter Molvær.

For the past 25 years, trumpet player, composer and producer Molvær has been a prominent and innovative figure in Norwegian and international jazz and related genres. He grew up in the beautiful countryside of Sula in Sunnmøre, and through his art he has always been very close to nature and concerned with environmental protection. With *Lucid Dream*, he leaves the stage and studio behind and takes dense atmospheric sounds into nature. Molvær has long been fascinated by the crystal-clear mental conditions that arise in states of uncertainty. Through their nocturnal wandering, the audience will experience how sound, light and images merge in an installation unlike any other.

With the help of a complex sound system, the audience is led along a pathway through the forest while videos, visual effects and lighting bring forth ghosts in the trees, on the ground and in the clearings in the forest. *Lucid Dream* is an artwork where the atmosphere shifts between pure and true beauty and the dangerous, destructive side of that same beauty. The audience's perceptions of time and space are expanded, and their senses sharpened. The darkness inhibits

our ability to comprehend, leaving us to rely on our emotions, our sense of hearing and smell, and the expectations we all harbour. The forest plays a part in giving each member of the audience different and individual understandings of the music and the art. Our imagination creates inner images, or, if you like, lucid dreams.

Lucid Dream is a Norwegian-German collaboration, and forests play a key role in the cultural history of both countries. In fairy tales, sagas and German Romanticism, forests have been synonymous with danger and uncertainty, though also with great beauty and shelter. People are often frightened but also fascinated by the forest at night-time. That is why it makes an ideal venue for an installation with ambitions to make a strong impression on the audience. As well as affording a wonderful view over Oslo, Ekeberg's natural landscape has a unique history to tell, and this will also play a role in the installation.

Lucid Dream was developed by Molvær in collaboration with Beate Schüler. The lighting and visual design is the work of Pekka Stokke from Trondheim, a lighting designer with a long list of credits, including the rock band Motorpsycho.

This ambitious project also harbours a vision of hope. *Lucid Dream* wants to raise the audience's awareness about environmental issues and to perhaps persuade them to take better care of nature in their local communities. AW

Music—Nils Petter Molvær. Artistic Directors—
Nils Petter Molvær and Beate Schüler.
Sound design—Jørgen Larsson.
Lighting and images—Pekka Stokke /
Jan Martin Vågen.
Head Technician—Hans Jürgen Müller /
Christian Hierhammer.

In cooperation with Ekeberg Park.
LUCID DREAM is supported by Kunststiftung
NRW (Arts Foundation of North Rhine-Westphalia)

Ultima Remake

Edvard Munch High School
10am–3pm
Performance every hour
Free admission

For the fourth year running, Ultima teams up with a high school for the Ultima Remake project. Together with a team of artists, students and teachers work on an installation that encompasses the theme of this year's festival.

The 2015 Remake is based on Olivier Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie*. The students at the recently opened Edvard Munch videregående skole (Edvard Munch High School) will create the installation with their teachers and the Remake team. It will be placed in the school's foyer. The installation is interactive and made up of sound landscapes, composition, dance and visual elements inspired by Messiaen's musings on nature.

With students and teachers from the music, dance and design/textile strands in cooperation with Heloisa Amaral, Gyrid Nordal Kaldestad, Koka Nikoladze and Maja Roel.

Listen to the sky Elisabeth Vatn

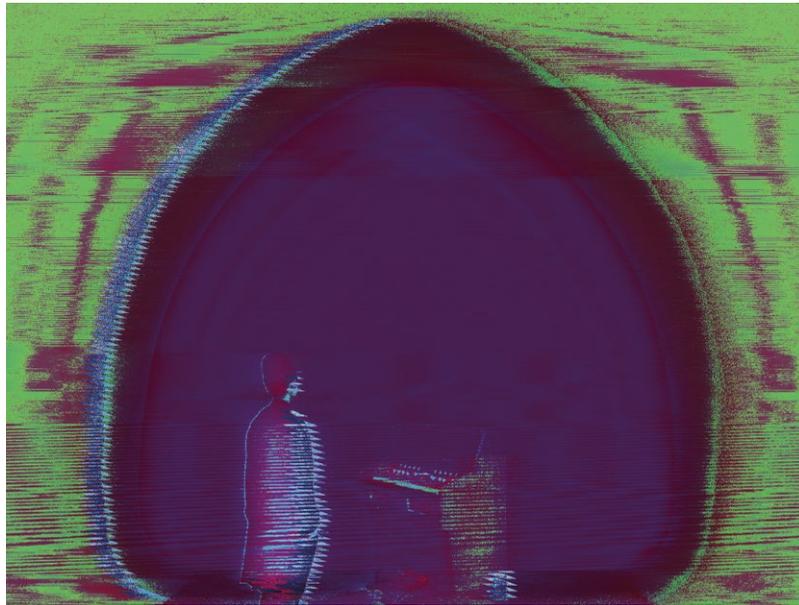


Photo Knut Bry (m)

Elisabeth Vatn *The Color Beneath*

Ekeberg Park / James Turrell's installation
Ganzfeld
6:30pm
kr. 300,-

Each concert has a maximum capacity
of 15 people

Exclusive sunrise and sunset concerts with
Elisabeth Vatn in James Turrell's light
installations in Ekeberg sculpture park.

The Color Beneath by musician and
composer Elisabeth Vatn was conceived
in James Turrell's light installations in the
old water reservoir on Ekeberg. Between
10–13 September, Vatn (harmonium,
Meråker clarinet, bagpipes) performs
with Anders Røine (langeleik, mouth
harp, violin).

Contemporary artist James Turrell
works with perception, colour, light and
space. The two location-specific works

Ganzfeld: Double Vision and *Skyspace: The Color Beneath* were both created for the old water reservoir in 2013. While *Ganzfeld* explores the way colours affect our senses, *Skyspace* makes use of the chromatic interaction between the concert space and the sky at dawn and dusk.

In *The Color Beneath* the composer and performer turn their encounter with the installation into music, partly following the composition and partly through improvisation. Consequently, none of the concerts performed in this unique setting will be identical.

Produced by nyMusikk and Ekebergparken

Ekeberg Park / *Ganzfeld*
Thursday 10 September, 6:30–8:10pm
Friday 11 September, 6:30–8:10pm
(FREE – part of Oslo kulturatt)

The Color Beneath album was recorded during
autumn 2014 and is released during Ultima 2015.
The concerts are staged in cooperation with
nyMusikk, Ekebergparken and Grappa Musikkforlag
with contributions by Fond for Utøvende Kunstnere.

ultima academy

Wolfgang Ernst
*On Nature and the Un-natural:
Revisiting the Wunderkammer*

Kulturhuset
4pm

Bringing together a unique combination of artworks, technological inventions and natural artefacts, the Baroque Wunderkammer was a diverse cabinet of curiosities that aimed to showcase the world's mysteries and marvels. In that sense, it predicted the chaos and data pile-up of the internet and social media.

This lecture by media theorist Wolfgang Ernst discusses the way online culture recalls the haphazard organisation of the Wunderkammer, and then looks at new digital manifestations of the curiosity cabinet, which can include sonic items as well.

Wolfgang Ernst is Full Professor for Media Theories at Humboldt University in Berlin and author of *Digital Memory and the Archive* (2013). His research covers media archaeology as method, theory of technical storage, technologies of cultural transmission, media aesthetics, critique of history as master discourse of cultural and technological time, and sound analysis.



Getting on your nerves Shlomowitz & Schubert / Plus Minus Ensemble

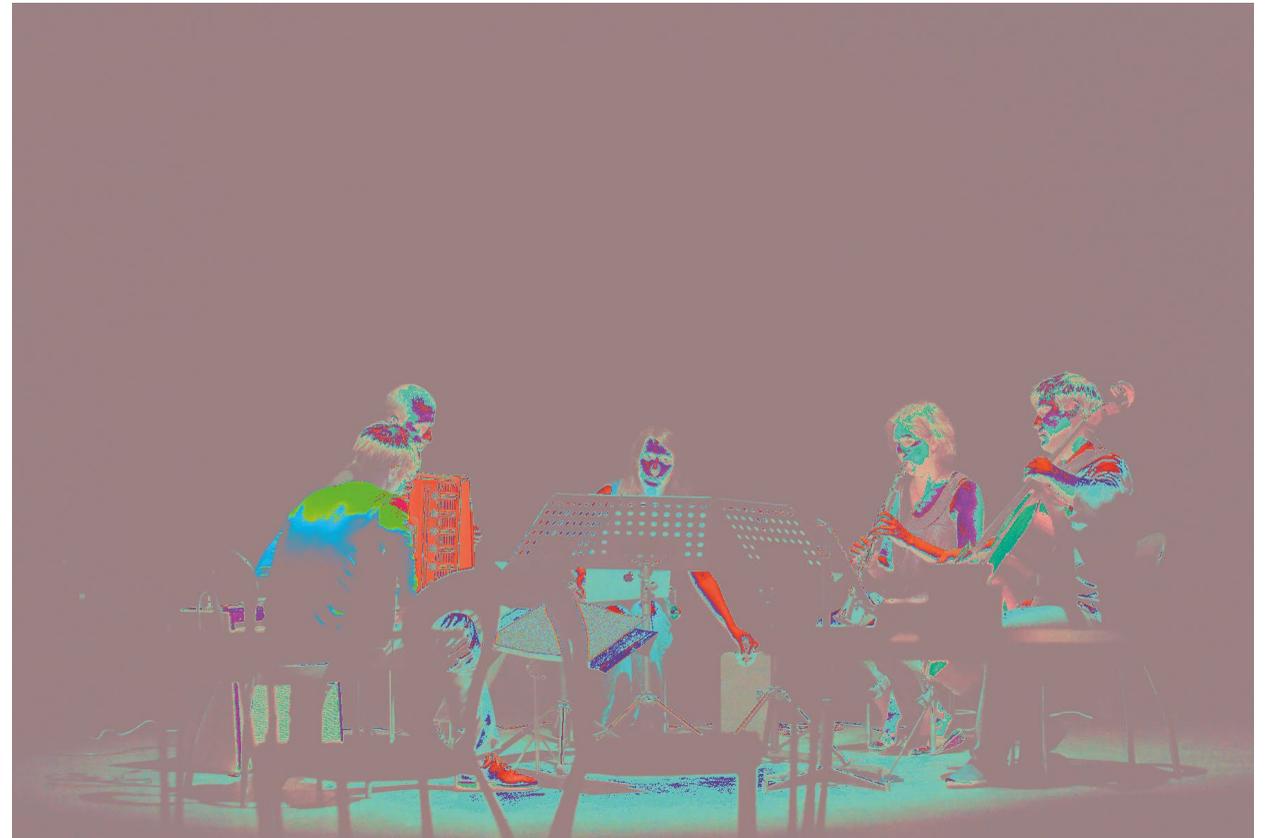


Photo Benedict Johnson (m)

Matthew Shlomowitz
Lecture About Bad Music (WP)
Alexander Schubert *Sensate Focus*

Plus Minus Ensemble

The Norwegian National Opera &
Ballet / Prøvesalen
5pm
kr. 200 / 100,-

Can music really be bad in itself or is 'bad' really nothing other than a subjective opinion?

That is the question Matthew Shlomowitz asks in *Lecture About Bad Music*,

which was specially composed for the Anglo-Belgian octet, Plus Minus Ensemble. The work, which was written for lecturer, clarinet, electric guitar, synthesizer and violin, has been commissioned by Ultima and will receive its debut performance here. Australian-born Shlomowitz draws on elements from many fields and genres, employing musical demonstrations and recreations of psychological experiments to examine differences between musical experience and musical material.

Alexander Schubert's *Sensate Focus* combines light and image, allowing lighting effects take on the role of fifth performer to a quartet of musicians. In the work, Schubert, who has studied bioinformatics, experiments with the

interfaces between gesticular movements and musical sounds, where the performers' physical movements and position in the room are essential elements of the composition.

Plus Minus Ensemble specialises in new music and modern key works. It is particularly known for its interest in avant garde, experimental and conceptual music, such as Stockhausen's seminal work from 1963 from which the ensemble takes its name.

In collaboration with the Norwegian National Opera & Ballet. Supported by Arts Council Norway

MO

Nature in person

Henrik Hellstenius



Photo Ultima / Henrik Beck (m)

Henrik Hellstenius *Ørets teater:*
Om naturen (WP)

Oslo Sinfonietta & Dans les Arbres
Conductor: Andrea Pestalozza

Norwegian National Opera & Ballet
Stage 2
7:30pm
kr: 250 / 150,-

Performances will also be given on 12
and 13 September at 6:30pm

'Sometimes we can see nature standing there, right in front of us. We think it is a figure, a reflection or a person. But it is nature. In person.' – Thure Erik Lund, *On Nature: An Essay (Om naturen. Et essay)*

In this encounter between concert and drama, the old and the new, and culture and nature, composer Henrik Hellstenius has combined the music of Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann and Edvard Grieg with that of Salvatore Sciarrino, the Norwegian-French quartet Dans les arbres, and his own compositions.

Ørets teater (Theatre of the Ear) is a through-composed performance that lies somewhere between a concert and a musical drama. Using light, text and video, Hellstenius sheds light on nature's role in

art as a source of inspiration, a theme, and as a physical prerequisite. Through the distinctive vocalists Njål Sparboe, Silje Aker Johnsen and Stine Janvin Motland, plus Oslo Sinfonietta and Dans les arbres, Hellstenius blends composition, improvisation, light, image and motion into a transcendent multimedia experience. *MO*

Produced by The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet and Oslo Sinfonietta

Soloists—Njål Sparboe, Silje Aker Johnsen, Stine Janvin Motland
Dramaturgy—Kai Johnsen
Video Boya—Bockman

The performance is a continuation of Henrik Hellstenius' four-concert series performed at the Bergen International Festival in 2011.

Laser fantasia

Atom™ & Robin Fox

Amnesia Scanner

Atom™ & Robin Fox *Double Vision*
Amnesia Scanner

Parkteatret
10pm
kr: 200 / 100,-

Double Vision is a spectacular feast of sound, music, colour and light. It's a collaboration between Atom™ (aka Uwe Schmidt) and the Australian video artist Robin Fox, merging Fox's synaesthetic laser show with Schmidt's deconstructed take on pop music, to create a unique audiovisual work that is both playful and insightful. Atom™'s background was in the Frankfurt

Techno scene of the early 90s (where he was known as Atom Heart), but he relocated to Santiago, Chile later in the decade where he has pumped out hundreds of releases under many aliases, including the electro-Latin vibes of Señor Coconut and warped pop songs of Lassigne Bendthaus; and has collaborated with Bill Laswell, Florian Schneider (Kraftwerk), Haruomi Hosono, Burnt Friedman and many more. His recent Atom™ album *Winterreise*, on the Raster-Noton label, was accompanied by his own photographs of icy landscapes.

Robin Fox has spent many years investigating the relationship between sound and image, with particular attention towards vibration, electrical voltage and light. He has created energy devices for

scientific use at the Bionic Ear Institute in Melbourne; released a handful of experimental electronic records both solo and partnered with Anthony Pateras; designed dance visuals and has amazed audiences with his immersive laser shows.

Also featured is a rare Norwegian performance by the mysterious electronica collective Amnesia Scanner, whose futuristic visions hint at the dystopian sci-fi of Philip K. Dick and soundtrack a world permanently corrupted by the excesses of genetic science, pollution and bio-hacking.

RY

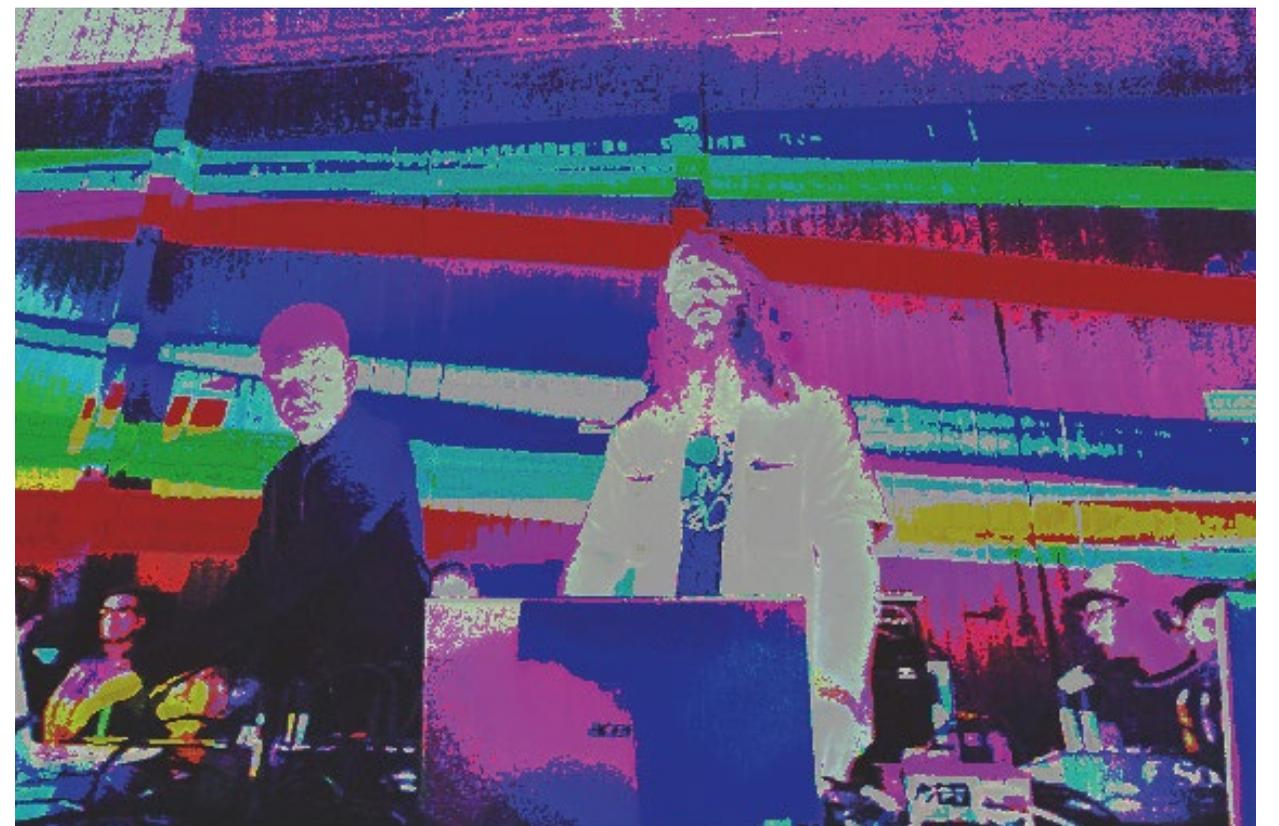


Photo Camille Blake (m)

La commedia feminina

Cecilie Ore

Cecilie Ore
Adam & Eve — A Divine Comedy

Kulturkirken Jakob
9pm
kr. 350 / 250,-

Also 12 September

Composer Cecilie Ore and librettist Bibbi Moslet have written a burlesque, political and socially critical opera about fundamentalist religion and misogyny.

‘... in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.’ – Genesis 3:16

Quotations such as these formed the basis for Ore’s and Moslet’s feminist and artistic exploration of how religions view women. By drawing on extracts from the Bible, the Koran, Jewish texts and elements from the *Declaration of Human Rights* and Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, they use the operatic format to ask the question: Is it possible to explain suppression and violence against one half of the world’s population for such a long time? And why is it so hard to get rid of it?

The form of the performance is based on *The Divine Comedy*. Soprano Tora Augestad plays the heroine Virgilia, who wanders through Hell via Purgatory on her way to Paradise. As master of ceremonies and guide, Virgilia treats the fragments of text and attitudes she encounters with a sense of wonder and an inquisitive mind; two qualities that are necessary for discerning myth from reality.

Seven singers have roles on stage, accompanied by a percussion trio, music, voices, and sounds from loudspeakers. The number seven is also a recurring theme in the story: Purgatory, with the seven deadly sins, represent the main element in the opera, where sins are presented as different types of violence against women: Wrath, lust, greed, gluttony, envy, sloth and



Photo Ultima / Henrik Beck (m)

pride create opportunities for rape, sex slavery, honour killings, and economic and social disparities between men and women.

Cecilie Ore highlights current political issues in her work. The opera *Dead Beat Escapement* (2008), another collaboration with Bibbi Moslet, is an outspoken artistic protest against the death penalty. There, too, the composer took familiar structures and placed them in new contexts; in this case quotations from the last words of 21 prisoners sentenced to death in the United States.

Cecilie Ore’s music cuts straight to the heart of her political message, which is what makes her such a unique voice among Norwegian composers. An art where the political message is so integrated and explicit is a rarity – and one that is not always welcomed. Modern, abstract forms and styles have taught audiences, artists and critics to expect some scope for interpretation – a freedom to read into one’s own experiences and ideas and not to have opinions or feelings forced upon us as members of the audience.

But Moslet and Ore’s project pays little heed to the audience’s self-esteem or preconceptions of what an opera should be. In *Adam & Eve*, art and message inextricably intertwine in a powerful and genuine attempt to use art to initiate change. **MO**

Composition / libretto—Cecilie Ore
Libretto / dramaturgy—Bibbi Moslet
Director—Susanne Øglænd

Conductor Cathrine Winnes

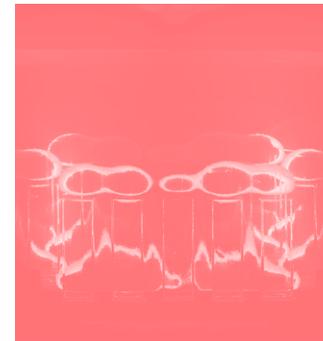
Singers: Tora Augestad, Eir Inderhaug, Ingebjørg Kosmo, Marianne E. Andersen, Håkon Kornstad, Frank Havrøy, Olle Holmgren
SISU Percussion Ensemble—Bjørn Skansen, Marius Søybe, Teodor Berg
Voice—Anders T. Andersen

Set Design—Carle Lange
Costume design—Signe Becker
Lighting design—Sverre Randin
Sound design—Cato Langnes and Mats Claesson

Performed in English

Supported by Norsk Kulturråd, Bergesenstiftelsen, Friitt Ord, Notam, Festsjellene i Bergen, Fond for Utøvende Kunstnere, Det Norske Komponistfond, Fegerstens Stiftelse, Fond for Lyd og Bilde, SISU og nyMusikk

Installations / Lunchtime concert



Quintetto (m)

Quiet Ensemble *Quintetto*

Teknisk museum
10am (opening)
kr. 120 / 60,-

Ticket to Teknisk museum

‘We are so used to seeing that suddenly we forgot how to look, so used to hearing that suddenly we forgot to listen.’

Every movement we see in nature can be perceived as a visual concert, like a storm of birds moving together making astonishing patterns, or snow falling from the sky and touching the ground. *Quintetto* is based on the study of casual movement of objects or living creatures used as input for the production of sounds. The basic concept is to reveal what the ‘invisible concerts’ of everyday life. In this installation the scene is five aquariums with a goldfish in each. The movement of the five fishes is captured by a video camera that translates their movements in digital sound signals/music in real time.



Herman Vogt (m)

Lunchtime concert
Herman Vogt *Concordia Discors, Études* (WP)

Løftet
12 noon
kr. 50,-

British pianist Ian Pace, a well known champion of contemporary repertoire, performs the world premiere of Herman Vogt’s *Concordia Discors, Études*. This is a cyclic work consisting of twelve separate movements requiring enormous technical skill.

The piece takes as its starting point the concept of concordia discors (harmony in discord), which stems from ancient Greek philosophy, and refers to the idea that conflicts between the four elements (earth, air, fire and water) create an overall harmony in the world. Vogt, a Norwegian composer, has been working on these *Études* for the past ten years and this will their first complete performance.



Terry Fox (m)

Terry Fox *The Labyrinth Scored for 11 Different Cats*

Atelier Nord ANX
3pm (opening)
Free admission (Oslo Cultural Night)

Terry Fox (1943–2008) was an American pioneer in conceptual and sound art who first gained attention in the 1970s for his installations and performances which broke with established art forms. His starting point was the transformation of materials, often using his own body, to explore extreme psychological and physical experiences. Between 1972–78 Fox explored the metaphorical symbolism in the labyrinth on the floor of Chartres Cathedral: Eleven concentric circles, 34 turns and 552 steps. The numerical and geometric structure in the stone mosaic was the source of inspiration for *The Labyrinth Scored for 11 Different Cats*, his only composition for tape. This work can be experienced at Atelier Nord during Ultima.

Produced by Atelier Nord

Elin Mar Øyen Vister *Røster III*

Deichmanske hovedbibliotek
3pm (opening and concert)
Free (Oslo Cultural Night)

Open until 23 October in the library's
opening hours

Røster III takes the listener on an aural journey through a series of sound tableaux carefully sculptured and arranged by the artist's archive of field recordings from the Røst Archipelago in Lofoten, northern Norway between 2010–15. The work places the listening body in a time-space continuum where nature and culture coexist and are given equal importance, giving ear to the eternal variation of voices and spaces; the geophonies and anthrophonies of Røst. *Røster III* is a sound work for eight channels or more, created and composed by Elin Mar Øyen Vister, site specifically mixed

and spatialized in collaboration with Trond Lossius and BEK in Bergen.

At Deichmanske hovedbibliotek, *Røster III* will be experienced in the old music room, which has a hexagonal space and was originally acoustically treated for the purpose of listening to the music library. The installation is created around a setup of eight speakers arranged in a vertical and horizontal landscape, between the books in the bookshelves, and for most of the time the room will not be lit.

Maja S. K. Ratkje will be joining the ensemble WeDoMagic as guest performer at the opening of the installation.

Clarinet—Kristine Tjøgersen
Cello—Inga Byrkjeland
Mix, objects and electronics—Elin Mar Øyen Vister
Vocal—Maja S. K. Ratkje



Photo Alexander Rishaug (m)

Ali Parandian
Untitled I, A Poem for Norway

Majorstuen Church, The Chapel
8–10pm
Free admission (Oslo Cultural Night)

Open from 19 September between
10pm and midnight

Multi-channel sound installation based on audio and visual recordings made in Oslo between 2010 and 2015. Using documentation of man-made environments as its starting point, and with the addition of abstractions, this work endeavours to create a state whereby the viewer can focus on what lies beyond his or her own circumstances. The subdued style of the work endeavours to integrate the acoustic and architectural possibilities that lie in the church building. Ali Parandian moved from Tehran to Norway in 1989. He received his training in sound design at the Norwegian Film School in Lillehammer. The exhibition is free and open to everyone throughout Ultima.

ultima academy

Battle of the Analysis Giants #3:
Turangalila

Lofet
11 September
11am

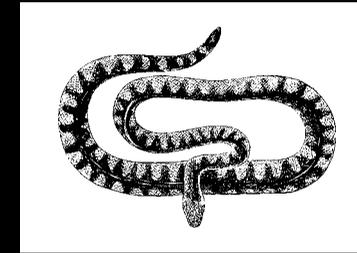
The Analysis Giants to battle it out for a third time. Composers Trond Reinholdtsen and Ole Henrik Moe dissect and explain Olivier Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphony*. Welcome to a morning of music theory, philosophy and psychoanalysis with a twist.

Anders K. Krabberød *A Short History
of Biology*

Kulturhuset
3pm

This lecture by Anders Kristian Krabberød presents a selection of the main events in the history of biology, and traces how historical events, technological innovations and advances in other scientific disciplines have shaped the evolution of the study of life.

The history of biology stretches back to ancient Egyptian medicine and to the works of Greek philosophers such as Anaximander and Thales of Miletus. These early attempts at understanding nature were driven by the belief that knowledge about plants and animals could increase chances of survival. During the Renaissance, biology became a scientific discipline. With evolution theory and the genetic revolution, biologists have been able to glimpse for the first time how life has evolved from single cells to the enormous diversity we see today. Anders K. Krabberød is a PhD student



in biology at the University of Oslo. He is working on the evolution and genetics of radiolarians, or single-celled marine organisms with an intricate and beautiful skeleton. He also has a degree in philosophy and a special interest in the history of science. He has been teaching the history of biology as part of an introductory course for MA students at the department of Biosciences at the University of Oslo since 2010. He also plays bass in the avant-progressive rock band Panzerpappa.

Dag Hessen *Nature and Nurture,
Evolution and Culture*

Kulturhuset
4pm

Humans are shaped by evolution, but to what extent can mental and cultural attributes be explained by evolution, nature or more specifically genes? Can cultural traits and preferences be explained by genes or memes? And is culture a unique property of humans? How outstanding are humans, really, from an evolutionary perspective? This presentation by biologist Dag Hessen will discuss recent insights in evolution and genes, and link this to various aspects of human culture.

Dag Hessen is professor in biology at the University of Oslo. His interests range from evolutionary biology to ecology, genome size regulation, biology and philosophy, and nature at large. He is a member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and the author of numerous books on popular science such as *Genes, God & Gaia*, *Darwin: The World Has Never Been the Same* and a book on evolution for children, *Where Am I From?*



Luc Ferrari
Journal Intime (film, 60 min., 2015)

Kulturhuset
6:30pm

After studying with Olivier Messiaen, French composer and filmmaker Luc Ferrari established the genre of musique anecdotique, in which he looked for the poetry in field recordings of nature and human interaction. Filmed alongside the world premiere recording of Ferrari's brilliant, forgotten music theatre piece *Journal Intime*, this exclusive portrait by Testklang's Aron Kitzig is made up of diary excerpts, interviews with his widow Brunhild and the original collaborators on *Journal Intime* – as well as unpublished archive material that brings Ferrari's own voice back to life.

Chemical reactions

Små Grå / Kim Hiorthøy

Photo Tom Sachs *Små Grå (m)*

Små Grå / Kim Hiorthøy *Kjemi* (WP)

Teatersalen,
Bondeungdomslaget i Oslo
1pm
kr. 200 / 100,-

Also 13 September

Kim Hiorthøy joins forces with the vocal ensemble Små Grå. Hiorthøy, who has made his mark as a musician, writer, artist, illustrator and, more recently, as a choreographer, works on ideas that cannot be limited to one particular art form or artistic expression. For many years now, Små Grå have been producing performances combining music and movement without being confined by classic definitions of genre.

In *Kjemi (Chemistry)*, a performance of musical movement, both visual and audio impressions are broken down to their minutest components and meet each other in new constellations. It is a dramatic deconstruction, but carefully executed, with a sensation of wonder and a

pervading sense of beauty. It is improvisation, speech and written music, movement and dance, sometimes in groups, sometimes individually, and otherwise mixed.

Kjemi is a performance, or a concert, that uses the most concrete materials we have – the physical elements in and around us – as building blocks for some of the least concrete material we have: artistic meaning. It's not fiction; it's just a slightly strange performance about reality.

MØ

Oslo tripping

James Dillon / Jon Øivind Ness
Cikada



Photo Observatoriet (m)

James Dillon *Oslo / Triptych*
Jon Øivind Ness *Gimilen*

Cikada

Parkteatret
3pm
kr. 200 / 100,-

Scottish composer James Dillon is one of the UK's most significant composers, with commissioned works from and performances by many of the UK's biggest orchestras and influential international ensembles. *Oslo/Triptych* was commissioned for Cikada in 2011 as part of a three-part project Dillon conducted with ensembles from Leuven, Oslo and New York. Dillon is known for his large-scale projects, such as *Nine Rivers*, the symphonic cycle of monumental proportions, but his smaller works are also impressive, often composed with specific musicians in mind. *Oslo/Triptych* includes Indian harmonium, an instrument often used by Cikada in recent years.

The concert also marks the launch of Cikada's new album which consists

of music by Jon Øivind Ness and Liza Lim. Ness's piece *Gimilen* (2014) takes its name from two lakes in the woodlands north-east of Hakadal, Norway. He often draws on nature for his inspiration, and several of his works are named after lakes in the Oslo region. *Gimilen* had its premiere at the KLANGSPUREN Festival in September last year.

Headed by pianist and artistic director Kenneth Karlsson, Oslo-based Cikada is one of Norway's most distinctive contemporary music ensembles. The ensemble collaborates closely with composers on creating new works.

Produced by Cikada

MØ

Forever changes Heine Avdal & Yukiko Shinozaki

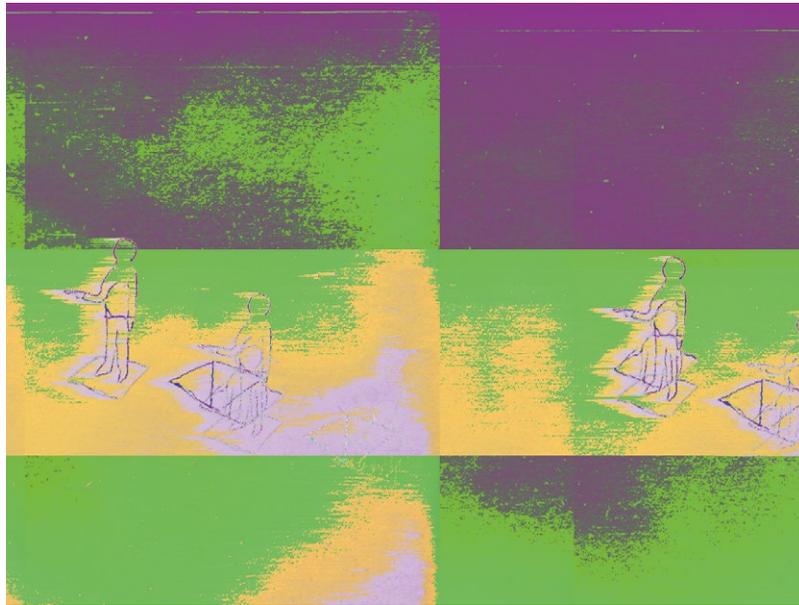


Illustration Arnaud Meuleman (m)

Heine Avdal / Yukiko Shinozaki
Distant Voices

Black Box Teater
7pm
kr: 240 / 100,-

Also 13 September

In the past few years, the Norwegian-Japanese duo Heine Avdal and Yukiko Shinozaki, who have bases in Oslo and Brussels, have made their mark on the international scene in the interface between dance, visual art, video, music and technology. Their art projects have a strong performative element, and they often perform in semi-public spaces.

In *Distant Voices*, they return to the traditional theatre stage and take the physical space in which they find themselves as their theme. By using moving objects, the space is transformed into a kind of fluid sculpture that serves as

installation, stage design and architectural element. The duo explores the tension and contrast between reality and fiction, and between bodies and objects, in a room that is in constant motion. Here the imagination can pass through its memory of what it thinks it just saw, its perception of what is actually happening, and its anticipation of what is to come. How are physical experiences affected by the space, and what happens when something breaks free of its spatial limitations?

Avdal and Shinozaki are joined by, among others, André Eiermann, creator of the concept of post-spectacular theatre.

sw

Concept & Direction—Heine Avdal, Yukiko Shinozaki
Visual artist—Arnaud Meuleman
Dramaturge—André Eiermann
Created & performed by—Andrey Andrianov, Heine Avdal, André Eiermann, Ingrid Haakstad, Arnaud Meuleman, Kayoko Minami, Eivind Seljeseth, Yukiko Shinozaki
Sound design—Roeland Layten
Sound technique—Mathieu Viot
Technical support—Protocol Room
Production—fieldworks vzw, Heine Avdal
Co-production—STUK (Leuven), APAP Network; BIT Teatergarasjen (Bergen), Kunstencentrum Buda (Kortrijk) and Pact Zollverein (Essen), Kana Theatrical Centre (Szczecin), CO2 festival (Beirut). In collaboration with: Kaaitheater (Brussel) With the support of—Norsk Kulturråd, Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie.
Illustration—Arnaud Meuleman

Simon Steen-Andersen *Korpus*
Harry Partch *And on the Seventh Day*
Petals Fell in Petaluma
Helge Sten *Sow Your Gold*
In The White Foliated Earth (WP)

Ensemble Musikfabrik

Kanonhallen
6pm
kr: 350 / 250,-

NB: Please arrive at Kanonhallen in good time

When Ensemble Musikfabrik performed Harry Partch's *Delusion of The Fury* during Ultima 2013, the concert received rave reviews, and made a lot of lists of that year's best stage performances. This year, the Cologne-based ensemble returns to Ultima with even more Partch, plus a collaboration with the Norwegian musician and producer Helge Sten (*Deathprod*, *Supersilent*).

American composer, theoretician, visionary, bohemian and instrument maker Harry Partch (1901–74) was a pioneer of the just intonation movement in the United States, and his complex tuning system makes playing his music on conventional instruments impossible. That's the reason why Ensemble Musikfabrik and instrument maker Thomas Meixner have worked hard at recreating Partch's instrument collection and learning to master its intrinsic qualities.

In the Pitch 43 – Tuning the Cosmos project, the ensemble works closely with a number of composers, exchanging ideas and knowledge about instruments and notation to be used for new compositions and in new ways. As these new impulses encounter the rich world of Partch's musical legacy, they open up new perspectives on the

Tuning the Cosmos Ensemble Musikfabrik / Helge Sten

musical landscape of the previous and current centuries. Throughout the project, they bring Partch's ideas into the future.

'Writing new music for Harry Partch's instruments had been an unattainable dream until it's suddenly become real,' says Helge Sten. 'I was introduced to Partch's music in the early eighties, when he was singled out as one of the sources of inspiration for The Residents. His life and work as a composer, musician, DIY record executive, instrument maker, philosopher, hobo and outsider has chiselled out a new space for composers to move in. You have to think anew when you get to work with such a wide array of microtonal acoustic instruments.'

Partch's microtonal collection is made up of more than fifty different instruments, based on everything from strings and percussion, handheld bells, bellows and keyboards. Their innovative names – Mazda Marimba, Chromelodeon, Bloboy, Crychord, and Cloud Chamber Bowls – reflect their musical exoticism. When Partch's instruments were reconstructed for the Ensemble Musikfabrik in 2012, it created the necessary framework to perform his unique music. Being one of the world's leading contemporary music ensembles, the role as the foremost caretaker for Partch's musical legacy came naturally to Ensemble Musikfabrik.

As a member of the improv group Supersilent and the rock band Motorpsycho, Helge Sten has been a leading sound artist, producer and musician for several decades. Using the moniker Deathprod, he has inhabited his own patch of the music world since 1991, finding himself on the crossroads between noise, jazz, contemporary and electronic music as well as rock. His 'audio virus universe' encompasses homemade electronics, old tape loop echo machines, ring modulators, filters, theremins, samplers and other solid state equipment. Sten was educated at Kunsthøyskolen i Trondheim (Trondheim Academy of Fine Arts), and

as a mastering and sound engineer he has made his mark on numerous Norwegian records.

Ensemble Musikfabrik will also perform Partch's *And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma* (1963–66), a work that consists of 23 pieces, each one minute long. They span from duets to septets and thoroughly explore Partch's microtonal system.

The world renowned Danish composer Simon Steen-Andersen has been working on the Pitch 43 project as well, and *Korpus*, his brand new piece for seven or eight musicians on three different Partch instruments is performed at Kanonhallen as well.

This is a once in a lifetime chance to experience the music Helge Sten has composed for Ensemble Musikfabrik. No wonder the *Guardian* lists this concert as one of the art experiences not to miss in 2015.

AW

Supported by Arts Council Norway



Photo Carsten Aniksdal (m)

Hopping mad Jan Martens

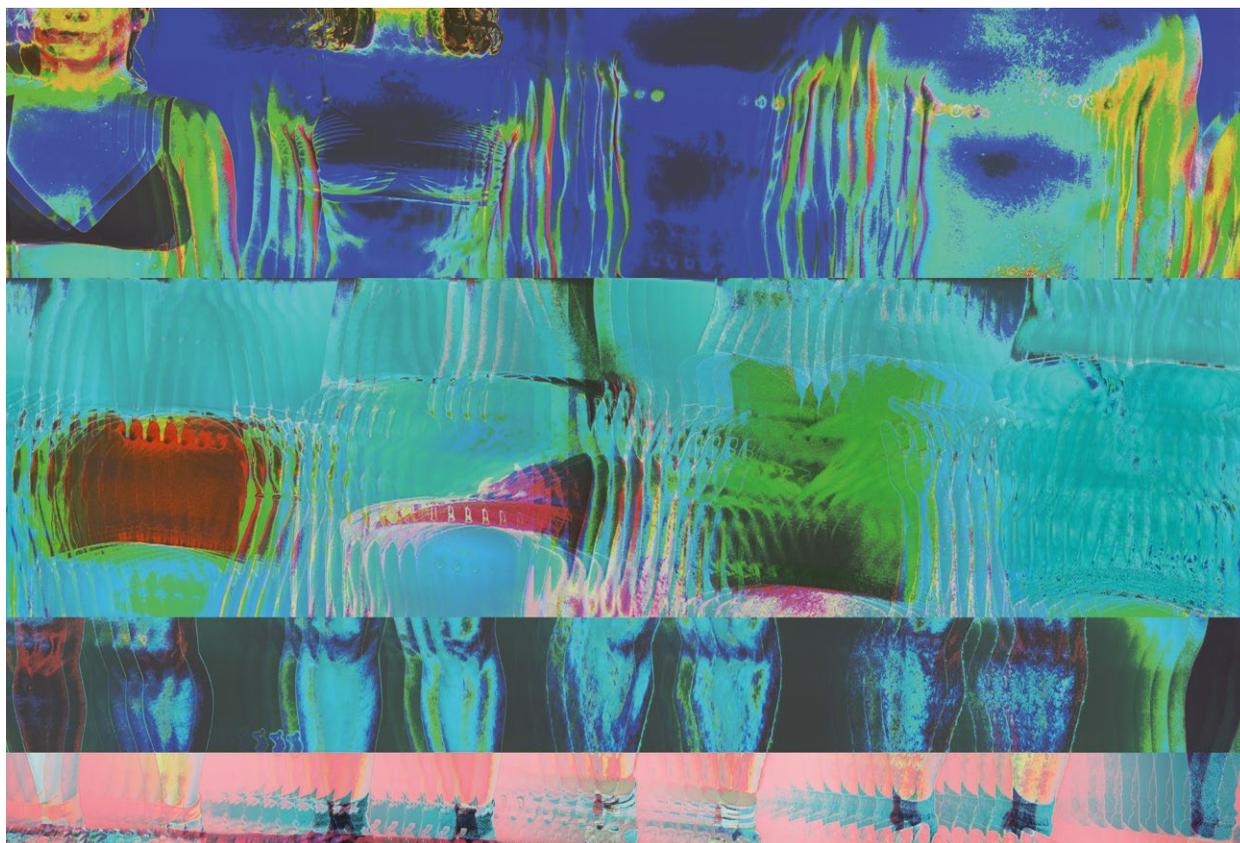


Photo Studio Rios Zertuche (m)

Jan Martens *The Dog Days Are Over*

Dansens Hus
9pm
kr. 290 / 175,-

Also 13 September

'When you ask a person to jump, his attention is mostly directed toward the act of jumping and the mask falls so that the real person appears.' This quotation by photographer Philippe Halsman serves as the starting point for *The Dog Days Are Over*, a minimal and political work for eight jumping performers.

The award-winning Belgian choreographer Jan Martens has explored jumping as artistic expression for some time. In this performance he lets eight dancers jump continuously for 70 minutes. Martens's complex mathematical choreographic work attempts to reveal the person behind the dancer and, under the motto 'perfection is boring', reveal their vulnerability and fallibility. This unusual choreography

challenges us as the audience to think about what we want: Do we want the dancers to fail or succeed? Or are we like a blood-thirsty audience at a bullfight, deriving entertainment from the exhaustion of others? The performance is presented in cooperation with Aerowaves. sw

Produced by Dansens Hus

By—Jan Martens. With—Cherish Menzo, Nelle Hens, Piet DeFrance, Kimmy Ligtoet, Steven Michel, Julien Josse, Laura Vanborm, Naomi Gibson and/or Morgane Ribbens, Ilse Ghekiele, Victor Dumont, Connor Schumacher. Light design—Jan Fedinger. Dramaturgy—Renée Copraij. Technique—Michel Spang. Photo—Piet Goethals, Alwin Poiana og Studio Rios Zertuche. Production—ICKamsterdam and JAN. Co-production—Frascati Producties, SPRING performing arts festival, DansBarant, La Briqueterie CDC du Val-de-Marne, tanzhaus nrw and TAKT Dommelhof. Supported by—workspacebrussels og wp zimmer. Financial support—Flemish Authorities and Performing Arts Fund NL.

Sights for square eyes Matmos + Ensemble

Robert Ashley *Perfect Lives*

Matmos + ensemble

Vulkan Arena
10pm
kr. 200 / 100,-

Named after the malevolent sci-fi film *Barbarella* from 1968, M.C. Schmidt and Drew Daniel are the duo behind the name Matmos, who became famous in the nineties for their distinctive fusion of musique concrète and rhythmic patterns often associated with electronic dance music. In Matmos's universe, the samples of plastic surgery and rat cages are as normal as the sound of Bible pages and crackling latex. Matmos's personal and inventive approach to sampling culture and modern music from almost all genres have made the duo worldwide stars. Their collaboration as part of Icelandic vocalist Björk's touring group has also been a contributing factor.

Both of them are currently teaching in their adopted home town of Baltimore, but they met at a strip joint in San Francisco where Daniel worked while studying philosophy. Their first release came in 1997, and more than 13 albums have followed since. They have worked with several prominent artists such as Antony, Terry Riley, The Kronos Quartet, David Tibet, Marina Abramovic, Willem Dafoe, Zeena Parkins, So Percussion and The Princeton Laptop Orchestra. Their latest album, *The Marriage of True Minds*, was released in 2013 and is based on a parapsychological experiment. Using telepathy, the duo tried to convey their own intentions for the album to several test subjects, who in turn provided the basis for the music in the form of the responses about sound and images they felt they had received.

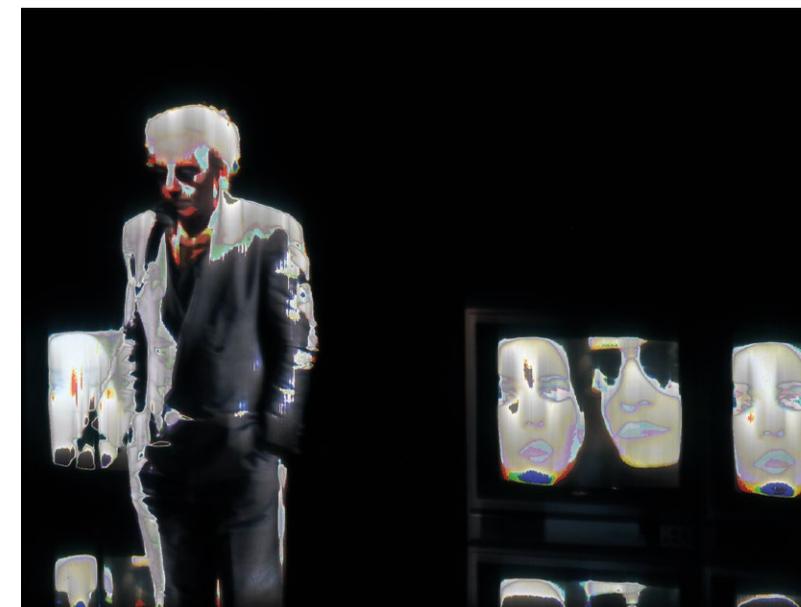


Photo Jacqueline Humbert (m)

Complicated? Perhaps, but Matmos also have a deep element of fun and adventure in their musical excursions.

During *Ultima*, Schmidt and Daniel will perform the first and final parts (*The Park* and *The Backyard*) from US composer Robert Ashley's (1930–2014) ground-breaking TV opera *Perfect Lives* (1984), which is often described as one of the definitive text-sound compositions of the late 20th century. An opera about a bank raid, cocktail bars, geriatric love (late at night in a supermarket) and adolescent elopement in the American Midwest, *Perfect Lives* is populated by a range of characters, mainly two musicians: the singer E and his friend Buddy, 'The World's Greatest Piano Player'. Together they arrive in a small town in the Midwest to entertain at the Perfect Lives Lounge. They fall in love with two of the locals and decide to commit the perfect crime: to rob a bank for a sizeable sum of money for just one day and let the whole world know that the money was missing.

Through its everyday expressions, *Perfect Lives* transforms familiar material into a metaphor for the rebirth of the human soul, and has been described as a comic opera about reincarnation. It is also part of a trilogy (with *Atalanta* and *Now Eleanor's Idea*) that has a pulse of 72 beats per minute for all the parts. The story is moved forward by a hypnotic and ever-present voice (the Narrator R), but Ashley also gave the actors wide scope for artistic freedom to develop their characters. Ashley's vision of a new operatic style also applied to the process of making it: 'Well, if I say it's opera, it's opera!' he once retorted to a critic. 'Who's running this show, anyway?'

Matmos performed *The Park* and *The Backyard* for the first time in 2014, the year Ashley died. They are joined by musicians and singers on stage, while the voice of the narrator R is played by M.C. Schmidt. sw

Massage for the brain

Rob Young

Drew Daniel of American duo Matmos explains the background to the group's version of Robert Ashley's 'opera for television', *Perfect Lives*, at Ultima.

What interests Matmos about Robert Ashley's work?

When we started making music together, one of the very first works that M.C. Schmidt and I made was a song, never released, called 'Massage The Brain' which simply looped and manipulated an excerpt of *Perfect Lives*: 'Short phrases repeated massage the brain'. Like so much of Ashley's work, that phrase is both instantly intelligible and yet full of sly humour. Is it a critique of minimalism? Is it a mockery of the very thing it also exemplifies? Ashley's music is calming and alarming at the same time; it massages but then it cracks you up and estranges you, too. When you try to describe his work to people, you feel foolish because many of the adjectives that come to mind – hallucinatory, psychedelic, poetic, meditative, funny, creepy, seductive – aren't helpful; they don't capture the curious way in which, in his work, the everydayness of American life and speech becomes elevated into something quite odd and revelatory.

I think 'opera' was a signpost for the fact that music was only a part of what he was up to. The text and video means that his work is a conversation between a musical dimension and other dimensions. It works for the same reason that hip-hop works: The cadence and delivery of speech already has musicality in it, and becomes a fascinating, capacious and beautiful phenomenon when you can sharpen it and deliver it with the right kind of intensity. It helps that Ashley is a brilliant writer with an ear for the richness of American language.

Ashley's piece appeared at a time when 'television' took very different forms, and was consumed in very different ways, from now. How well does it work in 2015?

'Opera for television' is such a great, loaded phrase. Each noun cross-multiplies the other: Opera is transformed by

being 'televised' (faces seen in close-up, a cascade of visual images that constantly changes rather than a proscenium set, close-miked voices rather than singing loudly), but the reverse is also true, for television is re-enchanted and estranged by becoming 'operatic' (longform, ambitious, passionate, through-composed content rather than short commercialised messages). When Ashley first deployed opera for television, that phrase had, I think, a democratic edge of access and generality that squelched the high culture 'classy' signifier of opera in an American context, but also tweaked the snobby hostility to television that was a standard part of bohemian or avant-garde self-understanding. So it has that strange feeling of insistence upon the everyday that much of the libretto of *Perfect Lives* generates too.

What is television today? It used to be a badge of honour for artists to say 'I don't even have a television' and to uphold the culture of the small magazine, the warehouse performance or the underground in opposition to such a mass media form. Now, when computers are televisions and televisions are computers, and when the topology of popular culture and underground culture has been flattened and then bottlenecked through the same search engines and interfaces, Ashley's work looks not so much quaint as prescient.

What is the background to this particular commission/performance?

It began in admiration for Robert Ashley's work: Fandom, basically. We kept listening to the recordings, we loved them, and one day M.C. Schmidt proposed that we come up with a 'cover version' of *The Backyard*. We based our version on the Lovely Music LP version rather than later variants, and in some ways we took Ashley's willingness to adjust and transform arrangements, while keeping the text consistent, as permission to do the same thing. We performed *The Backyard*

in New York at The Stone and, astonishingly, Robert Ashley himself attended. It meant a great deal to us, as you can imagine, to be able to play this music for the composer, and to know that, even given the substantial differences between his performances and our realisation, we had his support and encouragement.

Years later in Baltimore, our friend Britton Powell came up with a string arrangement for *The Park*, and Britton asked M.C. Schmidt to deliver the text in a live concert setting, with Jen Kirby and Caroline Marcantoni as the additional speakers/singers. For a concert in New York City at Issue Project Room, Matmos played both *The Backyard* and a newly expanded and Matmos-ified version of *The Park*, expanding and altering the line-up, but keeping the string arrangement and the vocal trio intact. Lars Petter Hagen was at that concert, and he approached us about the possibility of coming to Ultima. We were very honoured and excited at the chance to transform and extend these arrangements. It's always a test to take such quintessentially American music outside of its home context and to see what happens.

Can you give us an idea what audiences will actually see/hear/experience, and how much interpretative licence you are giving yourselves? To what extent does Ashley's work give room for fresh interpretation?

When we decided to do *The Backyard*, it forced us to think about what we can and cannot do with our limited skillset, and what a 'cover' of Robert Ashley would involve. Stripped down to its core, for us *The Backyard* is: A voice delivering the text with a certain distinctive cadence and inflection, a drone that holds a tonal centre, and a rhythm that shifts emphasis but holds the tempo. Overall, the piece has to have the right qualities of fullness and openness or it won't work, and striving to find that balance is the real challenge.

When pairing *The Park* and *The Backyard*, the goal is to create a relationship between two different sections of a larger work that make sense in sequence, that have the right mixture of propulsive forward movement and hallucinatory stasis. Thanks to Britton's arrangement, *The Park* reflects the notation of Ashley's original, albeit in a refracted/stretched/reconfigured manner. Ideally the two arrangements complement each other, respectful of the originals and yet free-standing and different.

To realise *Perfect Lives* onstage, M.C. Schmidt collaborated with the Baltimore video artist Max Eilbacher to come up with a new video work which would act as a non-distracting but genuinely musical component of the ensemble. The result is a series of animations and elements which Max cross-fades and dissolves on the fly as M.C. Schmidt progresses through the libretto. Because the timing of how and when M.C. shifts from section to section alters each night, the video is not simply rolling as a readymade backdrop, but becomes responsive in a direct, albeit subtle way. This unfolds slowly, in keeping with the tempo of the piece, but the creeping shifts in content that result from live rendition of the video are an important dimension of what is happening. Ideally, it sneaks up on your consciousness in the same way that certain phrases in the libretto revise and alter previous information as your mind struggles to assemble Ashley's implied narrative.

What are the main challenges with this piece?

Perfect Lives grants a great deal of freedom to the musicians, but places some very intense demands upon the singers/speakers: They must sound relaxed and casual while executing something that is very precise, and that mixture of loose delivery and tight focus is both a challenge to realise and a pleasure to experience. On *The Park* in particular, the text is very precise about its pauses, gaps and cues, and this means that the interaction between M.C. Schmidt, Jen and Caroline has a real delicacy. The challenge is that the music has a highly soothing and entrancing effect, but it requires constant awareness and vigilance if you're going to avoid over-playing and clutter. In this sense it is both 'minimalist' and 'maximalist': there is a constantly changing surface and a deep, underlying form, and you have to be aware of both.

Do you have any thoughts on the connections between nature and music?

John Cage's resonant phrase about making art that would 'imitate nature in its manner of operation' has always winked at me across a distance. Cage is calling for artwork to be less concerned with the emotional expressivity of the self and more attuned to the diversity, complexity and chaotic dimensions of a non-human world. Sounds good to me!

That has always been a productive attitude for our work: A microphone opens onto the entirety of what surrounds it, but it also makes a selective cut. When you choose to work with the sound of water, or branches of dried twigs, or snails, or the skin of a rabbit, or crayfish neural tissue, you are setting up an encounter with materials whose sonic resources are curious, particular, and resistant. They are not 'instruments' played by humans to make music, and their resistance gives you some friction from which to push off. In making music out of them, you are torquing them into unforeseen (unnatural?) shapes. Cage uses the word 'imitate' and that kind of gives the game away: In making art, a human is involved at some level, and the slices they make out of this broad field called 'nature' are going to reveal their agenda, their location. So the 'imitation' fails, but that's interesting too.

What's your next project?

Our new album is perhaps the most fanatical record we've ever made. It is called *Ultimate Care II* and it is based entirely upon the sound of our washing machine. RY

Sound Stencil Koka Nikoladze



Photo Ultima / Henrik Beck (m)

Koka Nikoladze *Sound Stencil 0.1*

Starts at Dansens Hus
12 noon
Free

Sound Stencil is a concept that can be realised with mechanical robots or human performers, and turns objects in any given environment into integrated musical instruments. The first implementation, *Sound Stencil 0.1*, will be premiered at Oslo Ultima Contemporary Music Festival 2015, and is made of human percussionists who use smartphones for synchronisation. All the players listen to a synchronised audio score, which dictates various rhythmical patterns and gives them directions. Percussionists move around the city, keep at an audible distance from one another and hit various objects on their way. They move or freeze, speed up and slow down, spread out or bunch together. The audience is free to follow them as long as they want.

Koka Nikoladze is a Georgian violinist, composer and sound artist based in Norway. As an instrumentalist Nikoladze has performed as a solo violinist, chamber musician, and orchestral musician on various stages in Europe and the United States. Working more recently as a composer, he has composed acoustic and electroacoustic music for various ensembles, vocal music, including two premiered chamber operas, and also actively investigated the field of computer-human interaction.

RY

Produced by Notam



Photo Hires Anu (m)

Anders Tveit & Parallax *Parallax View*

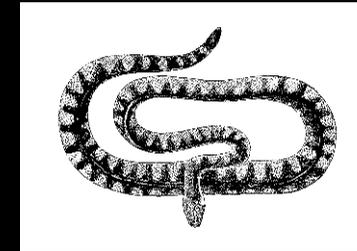
Deichman Library / Grünerløkka branch
8pm
Free

In a live installation, improvisation trio Parallax and Anders Tveit explore the area between composed and improvised music and the contrasts between acoustic and electronic sounds. In contrast to traditional multi-channel electroacoustic works, where the position of the sound and sound objects in a room are predetermined, Parallax and Tveit undertake a more improvised exploration of the listening room itself. The physical room, loudspeakers, the acoustic instruments and the electronic sounds blend into one 'instrument'. The audience and the performers are positioned in a circle surrounded by loudspeakers.

Produced by Notam

Performers
Guitar—Are Lothe Kolbeinsen
Trumpet—Stian Omenås
Percussion/drums—Ulrik Ibsen Thorsrud
Live electronics/live spatialisation—Anders Tveit

ultima academy



Bruno Laeng *Synaesthesia, or the Illusions of Perception*

Kulturhuset
12pm

Synaesthesia is the ability to experience one sense through another, such as hearing the sound of a trumpet as yellow, or 'smelling' poetry like perfume. As well as being a neurological phenomenon, artists such as Vassily Kandinsky and Olivier Messiaen claimed to have had synaesthetic perception and the idea is frequently referred to in works of art, especially music. This talk by Bruno Laeng surveys the phenomenon of synaesthesia and give some examples of its relationships with the arts and music.

Bruno Laeng is professor in cognitive neuropsychology specialising in topics such as attention, perception and memory in vision and music. He received his BA in experimental psychology from Università La Sapienza (Rome, Italy) and a Ph.D. in biological psychology from the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, USA). He has previously held positions at the University of Bergen, University of Tromsø, University of Guelph and Harvard University, and he has been a Clinical Research Fellow at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston.

Semir Zeki
The Neurobiology of Aesthetics

Kulturhuset
1pm

While studying how neural systems allow us to experience beauty, regard-

less of culture, learning and upbringing, neuroaesthetics has been deeply inspired by the humanities. This talk by Semir Zeki investigates the relationship between brain activity and aesthetic appreciation and artistic creativity. Further, it outlines the results of experiments on how the brain responds to 'beauty' in different forms – visual, musical and mathematical.

Semir Zeki was Professor of Neurobiology at University College London until 2008 and is currently its Professor of Neuroaesthetics. His most recent research is into the neurobiology underlying subjective mental and aesthetic experiences. He has written four books, *A Vision of the Brain* (Blackwell Scientific, 1993); *Inner Vision: An Exploration of Art and the Brain* (OUP, 1999) and *Splendors and Miseries of the Brain* (Wiley-Blackwell 2008). He has also co-authored *La Quête de l'essentiel* with the late French painter Balthus (Archimbaud 1995) and *La bella e la bestia* with Ludovica Lumer (Laterza 2011).

Sensate Focus – Alexander Schubert and Rob Young in conversation

Kulturhuset
2pm

Before turning to composition, German composer Alexander Schubert had extensive training in neurobiology and computer sciences. This has influenced his musical work, which focuses heavily on the links between light, gesture and sound.

His piece *Sensate Focus*, for instance, in which musicians are momentarily lit up every time they make a sound, has its roots in a 1973 scientific experiment in which kittens were reared in

an environment where the only source of light was a strobe pulsing every two seconds. The animals grew up unable to understand movement and, when their brains were dissected, their visual cortexes had significant differences from the norm.

Alexander Schubert will be in conversation with Oslo based music writer Rob Young, former editor of *The Wire*, current editor of *Jazznytt* and contributor to *frieze*, *Morgenbladet*, *Artforum* and more.

Rolf Inge Godøy *A Multidimensional Perception of Sound*

Kulturhuset
2:30pm

Although music is often heard as a continuous stream of sound, it is also possible to pick out more distinct sonic events, sometimes known as sonic objects. Experiencing these sonic objects may involve other senses such as vision, motion and touch, in addition to hearing. Drawing on the works of the French pioneer of musique concrète in the second half of the 20th century, Pierre Schaeffer, music researcher Rolf Inge Godøy discusses aural perception and the relationship between sound and bodily motion in the experience of music.

Rolf Inge Godøy is professor of music theory at the Department of Musicology, University of Oslo. His main interest is in phenomenological approaches to music theory, in other words, taking subjective experiences of music as a point of departure for music theory. This work has been expanded to include research on music-related body motion in performance and listening.

Penguin eggs, tree rings and boomerangs

Children's Day at Ultima

Riksscenen (Norwegian Hub for Traditional Music and Dance)

11am–3pm
kr. 50,-

CHILDREN'S DAY AT ULTIMA: THE SUCCESS CONTINUES!

Ultima is delighted to invite children of all ages to a whole day at Riksscenen for a jam-packed programme and activities designed especially with children in mind. Children's Day at Ultima offers the whole family the opportunity to see and experience what contemporary music can be. The programme offers concerts, installations and workshops with a wide range of artists.

In cooperation with John Vinge, a dedicated group of children will act as hosts and will be working on a sound installation, marketing activities, interview points and lots more.

Good food and drink will also be on sale. Here are some of the programme highlights:

MAJKA – THE GIRL FROM SPACE
Many will recall *Majka – The Girl From Space*, the popular 1970s children's TV series. Some of Norway's leading stage performers, headed by Julia Skar, have developed an installation specially for Children's Day inspired by the series and by outer space. The installation invites the public to wander through this exciting universe.

UT AV SKOGEN
Ut av Skogen (*Out of the Forest*) is a work inspired by the life of composer Harald Sæverud and by the forest and nature surrounding his farm, Siljustøl. Gisle Martens Meyer has created a performance that mixes orchestral and electronic music with sounds from nature and the forest,

narrated from a sofa group in the forest that gradually transforms into a sonic battleground between various characters/monsters who live in the forest.

MR. PING
Mr. Ping lives in the Antarctic. His home is terribly cold and has lots of snow. He has been given a very important task: to look after an egg. Although he hopes it is a penguin egg, there is no way of knowing what is actually inside. What is even worse is that other animals might want to get hold of it. Percussionist Knut Lothar performs this concert and uses different sounds and loops to which Mr Ping can dance around. The children who attend the concert are invited to help Mr Ping find a safe place where he can hatch the egg.

NYMUSIKK KIDS
What is music, what is a sound? When does a sound become music? What did Arne Nordheim mean when he said 'everything can sing'?

nyMusikk Kids is a workshop where children aged between six and twelve can experiment with electronic in an iPad workshop together with professional musicians. The result of the workshop will be performed in a concert. Parents are also welcome to attend the workshop.

ELIN MAR ØYEN VISTER – LYTTEVERKSTED
Elin lives on the edge of Røst in Lofoten, where she spends a lot of time recording bird sounds and other sounds from nature and the sea. She then uses these sounds to make music. She also has a workshop where she teaches children and young people how to listen. What should we listen for? How do we listen? Why should we listen at all?

ÅRRINGER (TREE RINGS)

Trees make sounds! Come and join in making Ultima's biggest instrument: a gigantic stokkofone composed of tree stumps and branches from the forest that are made to produce sounds. Everyone can join in and saw new tones for the giant orchestra. And of course we have to make a concert! A lot of research, cooperation and decisions will be needed before the music is ready and the concert can begin. And there will be a few surprises along the way. The work will be led by three seasoned musicians from Drivhuset music workshop: Isak Anderssen, Per Oddvar Johansen and Jon Halvor Bjørnseth.

BOOMERANGEN 2.0

Boomerangen 2.0 is a room you can only enter by first passing through a kind of labyrinth. Boomerangen borrows sounds from you and sets them to music. You can give Boomerangen as many sounds as you like, or you can simply be in the room and listen. Boomerangen continues to make new music all the time, so your sounds are mixed with the sounds of others. Inside the room you will find that you can change the music by the way you behave. Boomerangen 2.0 does not just do what you want it to do; it also has a will of its own.

PETER BADEN

Composer, drummer and producer Peter Baden works with electronic improvised music, jazz/pop, film scores, stage music and many other musical styles. He has also made many different types of installations. In collaboration with the Children's Day pilot group, he will be creating a new installation.

Supported by Sparebankstiftelsen DNB

Collapsing new buildings

Kurt Schwitters Day

Henie Onstad Arts Centre

1–4pm
kr. 200 / 100,-

Entry to all exhibitions at the Henie Onstad Arts Centre are included in ticket price.

13:00 (Auditorium) Karin Hellandsjø and Oda Wildhagen Gjessing discuss the art of Kurt Schwitters

14:00 (Studio) Building Instrument – SCHWITTERS (WP)

15:00 (Mini Prisma) Opening ceremony for new Kurt Schwitters room containing over thirty works on loan from Sparebankstiftelsen DNB, the National Gallery of Art, Architecture and Design, and the Sprengel Museum Hannover

15:30 (Mini Prisma) Agnes Hvizdalek performs parts of Kurt Schwitters's sound poem *Ursonate*

'Music that has collage qualities, samples and so on, is something we work quite a lot with,' says Mari Kvien Brunvoll of Building Instrument, about her group's new commission inspired by the Merz works and philosophy of German dadaist Kurt Schwitters, who spent the last years of his life in Norway. On the occasion of the opening of a new space at Henie Onstad Arts Centre housing a collection of Schwitters's art, the Norwegian experimental improvisers unveil a new piece of music composed as a response to the life and legacy of one of 20th century art's most important figures. Schwitters's Merzbau collages were a kind of absurdist response to the cubism of Picasso and Braque, but he developed these into full scale architectural plans and proposed entire houses constructed as haphazard



Photo Arne Sandvoll Building Instrument trio (m)

spaces full of jagged edges and strange angles. He wrote poetry, plays and 'sound poems' such as *Ursonate* (1922–32), whose alien language and strident tones have become one of the defining works of sound poetry. 'We definitely find his way of using his own voice and wonderful made-up language to perform his poems,' comments Brunvoll. 'They are very organic, and some of the dynamics and expression in this works are directly inspiring when it comes to composing melodic material. His approach to creating art out of anything – old tickets, garbage – inspires us to find new inspiration in small bits and pieces of sound and ideas and to imagine that it can later be a part of something bigger. Building Instrument began playing their mix of acoustic pop and improvised contemporary music in 2008, and have rapidly settled in the Norwegian musical landscape. The group's members are Mari Kvien Brunvoll (vocals, electronics, misc instruments), Øyvind Hegg-Lunde (drums, percussion) og Åsmund Weltzien (synths, electronics).

Their first self-titled CD was released on the Hubro label in 2014, and Brunvoll has picked up two nominations for Norway's Spellemannspris.

About their approach to interpreting the dadaist's ideas, Brunvoll says: 'We are opened up to his work, but definitely in his spirit, we will try to stay where we are ourselves, creating something from our own point of view. It seems like Schwitters was an artist who worked in a very intuitive way, and that he was in contact with something real inside of him.'

She adds: 'We are fascinated by his way of turning a home into a piece of art. How was his daily life? How was his approach to creating and expressing himself in this world? How was it to leave his loved ones to stay for long periods of time alone to create art?' Even if they can't sit down for a chat with the man in person, this promises to be an intriguing and revelatory musical dialogue with the legacy of an artistic maverick.

In collaboration with Henie Onstad Arts Centre
Supported by Sparebankstiftelsen DNB

Raptures of the deep

Camille Norment & David Toop

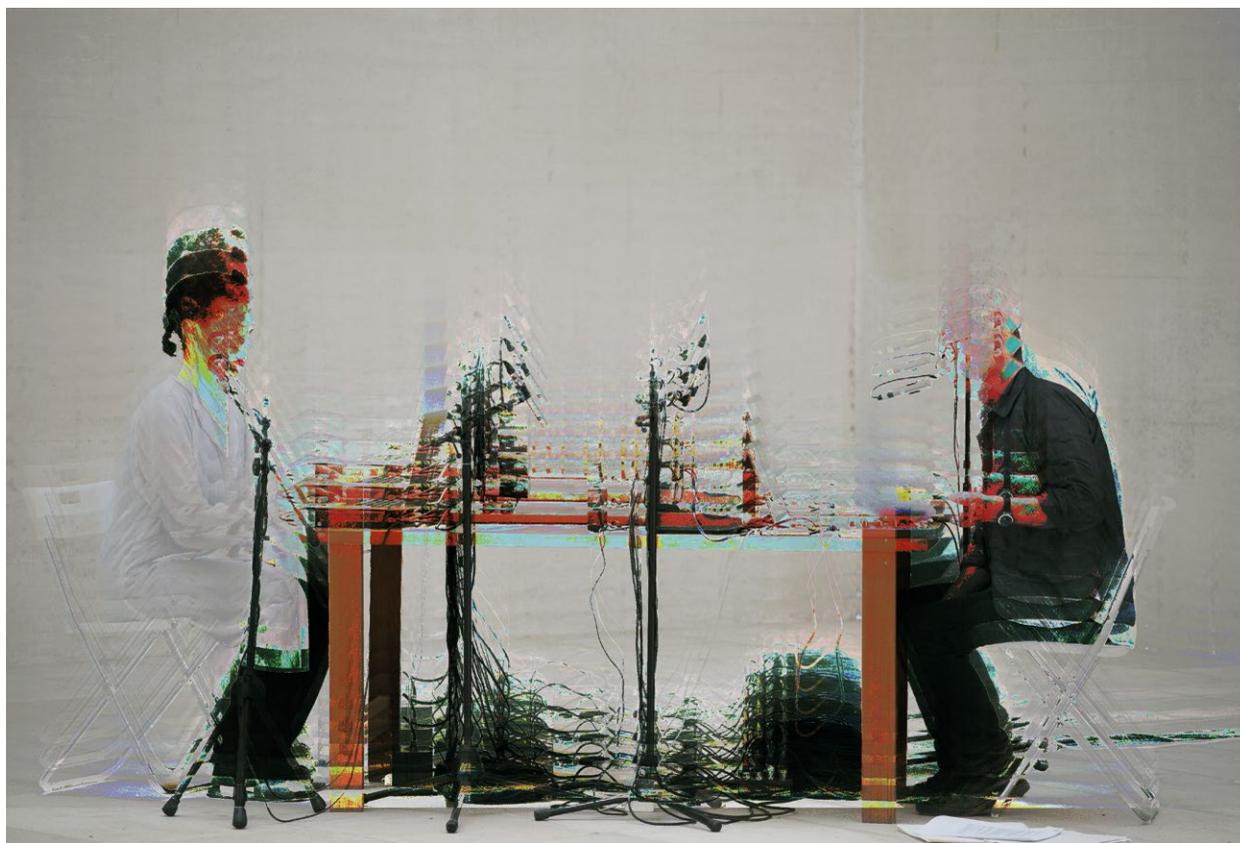


Photo OCA Marta Buso Camille Norment & David Toop (m)

Camille Norment *Rapture*

Camille Norment Trio + David Toop,
Sofia Jernberg, vocal ensemble Oslo 14

OCA
(Office for Contemporary Art Norway)
6pm
kr. 200 / 100,-

Pre-talk at OCA 5pm

Camille Norment is an American sound and visual artist based in Oslo. In 2015 her large-scale installation *Rapture* represented Norway at the 56th Venice Biennale.

As part of that project she held an improvised performance within the Nordic Pavilion in Venice with the composer, author and music critic David Toop, in May this year. Using an array of improvised instruments and machines including a glass armonica, wineglasses, amplified flute, bowed objects, electric motors and jars of liquid, as well as spoken word, the performance explores the legends, stories and mysteries of the depth of the oceans. This project has been performed several times and is in a state of continuous development.

Camille Norment's practice includes performance, installation, drawing and sound. She explores how the body is interconnected with its environment through

sound, and contemplates on the power of dissonance to create spaces for new ways of thinking. David Toop is a British composer, writer and professor of Audio Culture and Improvisation at the London College of Communication. His influential books include *Ocean of Sound* (1995), *Exotica* (1999) and *Haunted Weather* (2004). His solo albums include *Screen Ceremonies* (2006), *Spirit World* (1997), *Hot Pants Idol* (1999) and *Sound Body* (2007), and he has collaborated on other projects with Brian Eno, Max Eastley, sci-fi writer Jeff Noon and others

RY
In collaboration with OCA, nyMusikk and Notam

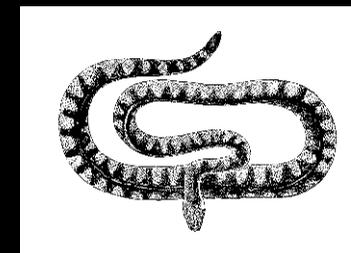
ultima academy

Henrik H. Svensen
Anthropocene, or the Age of Man

Kulturhuset
7:30pm

The Anthropocene is the Age of Man: the geological designation for the era in which we live today. Humans and our activities dominate the planet and circumvent nature, irreparably altering many aspects of the Earth's inbuilt systems: its biosphere, atmosphere, oceans and land masses.

Award-winning geologist Henrik H. Svensen, research professor at the University of Oslo and author of numerous articles on climate change for *Morgenbladet*, *GEO* and others, will talk about the cultural and scientific issues at stake in the Age of Man.



Richard Taruskin *Scientifica and Mirabilia*

Kulturhuset
8:30pm

In his massive *Turangalila-Symphony*, which opens this year's Ultima festival, Olivier Messiaen speaks of life, death, God and nature. With the composer's love for birds and birdsong as a starting point, eminent musicologist Richard Taruskin discusses the symbolic use of birds in the language of music: prophetic birds, messengers from beyond. This lecture links nature, music and the supernatural in a true Wunderkammer spirit.

Richard Taruskin is an American musicologist who has written and lectured on topics ranging across the whole of music – history and analysis as well as its cultural, social and political contexts. He has also been a performer and a choral conductor. Born in New York in 1945, he received his Ph.D. from Columbia University, where he was on the faculty until 1986. At the end of 2014, he retired from the University of California, Berkeley. His many books and articles include *Text and Act*, *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays*. He is the author of the six-volume *Oxford History of Western Music*.



Leonardo da Vinci – David Toop and Heloisa Amaral in conversation

Kulturhuset
9:30pm

A new music-text-film work for Ultima by David Toop, performed by Elaine Mitchener, is based around the scientific and artistic thought patterns of the quintessential 'Renaissance Man', Leonardo da Vinci. In conversation with Ultima Academy curator Heloisa Amaral, David Toop discusses the origins, inspirations and meanings behind this multilayered piece.

David Toop is a British writer, music critic, composer, improviser and currently holds the professor and chair of audio culture and improvisation at the London College of Communication. His books include *Ocean of Sound*, *Haunted Weather* and *Sinister Resonance* and he has written articles for *The Wire*, *The Face*, *The Times* and many others. He has released around 15 albums of his own music, solo or in collaboration with Paul Burwell, Max Eastley and Jeff Noon. His opera *Star-shaped Biscuit* was premiered at the Aldeburgh Festival in 2012.

Consolation in the Valley

Knut Olaf Sunde



Photo Ultima / Henrik Beck (m)

Knut Olaf Sunde *Comfort Music* (WP)

Ensemble Aksiom

Vulkan Arena
6pm
kr. 200 / 100,-

Comfort Music is a performance and concert installation by Knut Olaf Sunde, conceived to force the audience to experience the connection between the music and the actual place where it is being performed. The listeners meet up at Vulkan, situated in a small dip between St. Hanshaugen, Grünerløkka and the city centre which has sustained several centuries of water-mill industry along the Aker river and has only recently become a trendy, gentrified part of town. *Comfort Music* is an acted-out fiction utilising the environment's properties, history and aural qualities as artistic elements.

Location-specific art is a well-known phenomenon, but location-specific music less so. Through his artistic research

fellowship position at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo, Sunde has arranged a number of open air concerts, where he has attempted to integrate the natural surroundings with the listening experience, broadening the traditional concept of music.

Ensemble Aksiom is an Oslo-based ensemble dedicated to performing contemporary music. It grew out of the Norwegian Academy of Music alumni, and is focused on new music and improvisation.

Produced by Notam

MØ

Nocturnes and neon forests

Ensemble asamisimasa

Mathias Spahlinger
no 10, nachtstück mit sonne (WP)
Øyvind Torvund *Neon Forest Space*

Ensemble asamisimasa

Kulturkirken Jakob
8pm
kr. 200 / 100,-

Motivated by a steady focus on the new, on development, and with an unwavering faith in music and in the expressive potential of musicians, Mathias Spahlinger's music is constantly evolving. Spahlinger uses elements from a broad spectrum of genres and techniques, and this seventy-year-old modernist has managed to leave his mark on the German and European music scenes as composer, thinker, and teacher. Ensemble asamisimasa has collaborated with Spahlinger on several occasions, and is currently planning a Spahlinger festival in Oslo in October.

At this concert, the ensemble will give a first performance of Spahlinger's new work, *no 10, nachtstück mit sonne*. This concert also marks the launch of Øyvind Torvund's first portrait CD, *Neon Forest Space*. Torvund has closely collaborated with asamisimasa in connection with first performances and concerts of his other works. *Plastic Waves* (2013) for piano and quartet is a different kind of work in that it mixes sounds from snare drums, piano melodies, harmonica and bass clarinet with broken glass and references to circus sounds.

Ensemble asamisimasa is an established Norwegian ensemble dedicated to new music, and is known for combining classic avant-garde repertoire with new works specially written for them, often with elements of electronics, video and other media. The members are: Kristine Tjøgersen (clarinet), Håkon Stene (percussion), Anders Førisdal (guitar), Ellen Ugelvik (piano) and Tanja Orning (cello).

MØ

Lunchtime concert

Øyvind Mæland *AD UNDAS*
– *Sci-fi-Lieder fra Nordsjøen!*
Vocal Stine Janvin Motland
Piano Sanae Yoshida
KOMMEN du vid meg?
Cello Øystein Sonstad

Loffet
12 noon
kr. 50,-

Improviser and vocalist Stine Janvin Motland and pianist Sanae Yoshida team up with cellist Øystein Sonstad (Oslo String Quartet) to perform a selection of small scale yet powerful and intriguing works by Norwegian composer Øyvind Mæland. *AD UNDAS – Sci-fi Lieder fra Nordsjøen!* (2010) is a thirty minute song cycle that takes off from Øyvind Rimbereid's poem *Solaris Korrigert (Solaris Corrected, 2004)*. Mæland has produced several collaborations with Rimbereid in the past and *KOMMEN du vid meg?* (2012) is a miniature performance piece without song or lyrics. The principal characters are a couple, The Operator and Shiri, who are struggling to communicate with each other.



Photo Studio Lumo (m)

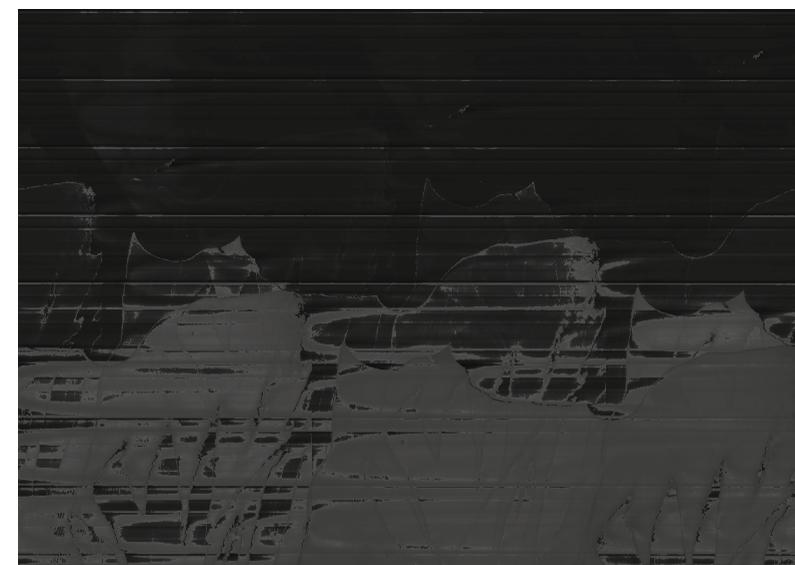


Photo Carolin Naujoc (m)

Bridging past and present

Eivind Buene / The Norwegian Chamber Orchestra

Eivind Buene *Stilleben*
 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Piano Concerto No 17 (2nd movement)
 Eivind Buene *Langsam und Schmachkend*
 Richard Wagner
Prelude from Tristan And Isolde
 Eivind Buene *Palimpsest, Garland*
 Matthew Locke *Consort of Four Parts,*
Suite no. 3 & Suite no. 1

The Norwegian Chamber Orchestra

Universitetets aula
 7pm
 kr. 395 / 120,-

The Norwegian Chamber Orchestra and composer Eivind Buene build bridges from our own time to the past.

Buene's *Stilleben* for 15 solo strings serves as an atmospheric prelude when played together with the second movement of Mozart's *Piano Concerto no. 17*. Using the opening tones of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, Buene treats Wagner's building blocks in a slow, translucent meditation. *Garland* is a comment on Baroque composer Matthew Locke's string suites.

Combining the works like this shows how recognition and repetition are two different things. Buene assumes that we interpret everything we experience based on prior experience – and that is not a bad thing, not even in contemporary music. By also focusing on the perceptible sound

experience, the works bridge the classical dichotomy between body and mind.

Eivind Buene (born 1973) is a Norwegian composer and writer whose music has been performed by the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Ensemble Intercontemporain and Cikada, among others. The Norwegian Chamber Orchestra is one of Norway's leading chamber orchestras, and places emphasis on a solid classical repertoire, new works, and creative outreach. The concert also marks the opening of the orchestra's season opening. MØ

Produced by The Norwegian Chamber Orchestra



Photo Mona Ødegård (m)

Dreams of genius

Elaine Mitchener & David Toop

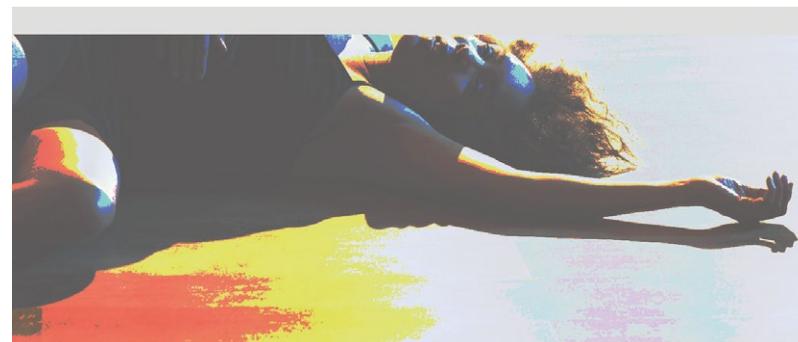


Photo Kin Ho (m)

David Toop *Of Leonardo da Vinci – Quills/A Black Giant/Deluge* (WP)

Music and libretto David Toop
 Voices Elaine Mitchener

Nasjonal jazzscene
 9pm
 kr. 200/100,-

Of Leonardo da Vinci is a result of a collaboration between improv legend, sound artist and author David Toop (score and libretto based on Leonardo da Vinci's accounts of his dreams), acclaimed photographer/film maker Barry Lewis, improvising vocalist Elaine Mitchener, and, making his operatic directorial debut, award-winning choreographer Dam Van Huynh. Together they have created an innovative contemporary music theatre piece that intricately melds sound art, image, film and movement to transform space, inviting audiences into a unique and intimate realm of disturbing beauty.

Divided into three sections, *Of Leonardo da Vinci* is inspired by the Renaissance artist's dreams and visions, as recorded in his famous notebooks. These included his first memory of being struck by the tail of a bird of prey as a baby, apocalyptic visions of a black giant arising out of Libya to engulf the world, and his

obsession with the Great Flood. During the performance, these are channelled via the vocalisations of a woman (Elaine Mitchener), as she considers the nature of life and its history as it moves ever closer to the end: where inspiration comes from, how meaning is divined from the marks we make, and the elusive presence of the soul. Like an oracle, witch, or shaman, she voices the spirit of Leonardo da Vinci, is caught up within his memories, prophecies and visions. In her trance she speaks with animals, moves inside and outside herself. She encounters angels, a black giant, hides within her own mouth and belly, expels herself, observes herself as a scholar or diarist might (reading her own life from a book). She is consumed by the giant whose fiery inner liquids spill out a deluge in which the voice becomes all voices.

'Nothingness has no centre, and its boundaries are nothingness...'
 – Leonardo da Vinci RY

In collaboration with Nasjonal jazzscene

Film Barry Lewis
 Choreography/director Dam Van Huynh

Lunchtime concert



Photo Jie Yang ClariNord (m)

Jon Øivind Ness *Sloughs*
 Gisle Kverndokk *Offertorium*
 Jörg Widmann *Nachtstück*

Trio ClariNord

Loffet
 11 noon
 kr. 50,-

Trio ClariNord is an award winning ensemble whose members are Emilio Borghesan (clarinet), Paula Cuesta (cello) and Jie Zhang (piano). In this lunchtime programme, the group present three recent compositions for clarinet trio. *Sloughs*, by Jon Øivind Ness, was the trio's first commissioned work. The title describes the skin after a snake's moulting, and the work is formed using motifs from previous works for cello.

Offertorium, by composer Gisle Kverndokk, is inspired by the 20th century writings of the Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on preparing for the Eucharist and treating the earth as a sacred offering. Along with *Nachtstück*, by German composer Jörg Widmann, these works demonstrate three very different approaches to the contemporary clarinet.

Percussion and pulsars
 Gérard Grisey
 Pinguins and SISU



Gérard Grisey *Le Noir de l'Etoile*

Pinguins & SISU percussion ensembles

Kulturkirken Jakob
 7pm
 kr. 200 / 100,-

Gérard Grisey's spectacular *Le Noir de l'Etoile* has never been performed in Norway before, so this is a rare opportunity to take in a truly grand work by the French composer – a reflection of his fascination with stars and outer space.

Olivier Messiaen, Henri Dutilleux and Karlheinz Stockhausen were among his teachers, and Grisey was an early adopter of computer technology to analyse the tonal qualities in music. He became a pioneer within so-called spectral music in the 1970s. One of the main tasks he set himself was to explore the subtleties between harmonic overtones and noise. He is famously quoted as saying, 'We are musicians and our model is sound not literature, sound not mathematics, sound not theatre, visual arts, quantum physics, geology, astrology or acupuncture.' Sound as a material, a tangible element, a living phenomenon. By meticulous examinations of the overtones in just one single timbre, spectral composers were able to stretch the most minute sound phenomena and cast them in new shapes.

Le Noir de l'Etoile has its origins in an encounter with the astronomer Joe Silk at Berkeley in 1985. It's based on radio signals from rotating neutron stars called pulsars. The Vela Pulsar, which Silk had discovered, is the debris of a star that has long since died, but whose emissions can still be discerned using a radio receiver. Thus, the sounds emanate from outer space and are reproduced by means of four loudspeakers which in their turn interact with the sound of six percussionists on platforms in different places at the concert venue. Surprisingly, the sounds blend in very smoothly, since the signal from the Vela Pulsar is so orderly and percussive that it originally led to some speculation about a possible attempt by space beings to communicate.

Grisey himself described the Vela Pulsar sound as 'a meeting with the eternal timekeepers', and this work is a celebration of these remote and strange sounds.

Nevertheless, the interaction with the percussionists lends a feeling of contact to the audience, which is somehow lifted out of the concert setting. Grisey wanted to challenge both the listeners and performers in their perception of time and the way sound affects it. *Le Noir de l'Etoile* is a musical examination of sound, space and time.

Even as the piece was being finalized in 1989–90, Grisey had done away with the term 'spectral music' or spectralism, but many of his ideas have outlived his death in 1998. The concept behind *Le Noir de l'Etoile* is also associated closely with this year's nature-themed Ultima Festival, stretching from the most minute physical sound to the vastness of space.

The work is performed by two Norwegian percussion ensembles, Pinguins and SISU. Despite their young age, the members of Pinguins, Sigrun Rogstad Gommæs, Johanne Byhring and Ane Marthe Sørlien Holen, have already met with international acclaim. Veterans of 22 year, SISU consists of the trio Tomas Nilsson, Bjørn Skansen og Marius Søbbye. During this time, it has become one of Scandinavia's leading contemporary music ensembles. They both share an open and inquisitive attitude towards all musical challenges. This outlook serves well for *Le Noir de l'Etoile*, a work as fabled as it is demanding. AW

On natural rhythms: A riff

Rob Young

The Earth was the first clock. As soon as civilisation's most ancient astronomers – or stargazers – realised that the heavens moved in regular patterns, and connected the movements of the sun and moon with the regulated shift of years, seasons, months, days, hours, minutes, the human calendar was locked in to the gigantic mechanism of the universe. 'Circadian rhythm' is the name for measures based on the cycles of planetary motions, the rhythmic patterns soundtracking nature's inescapable beat. The harmonic theory that emerged from that ancient world spoke of the music of the spheres, but western music of the classical and romantic period downplayed the other important aspect: the rhythms of the cosmos. Flow, development, structure dictated by feeling, intuition or programmatic portrait took precedence over non-human dynamics. In the classical orchestra, percussion is either non-existent, or used as accent, texture or intensification, it's rarely an end in itself and even more seldom is it in the foreground of the sound field. (How many concertos for percussion exist?)

It took jazz, rock, funk and all the variants of electronic music – as well as the phonographic rediscovery of many forms of global and traditional musics, from African drumming to Balinese gamelan – to reinstate the idea of music whose driving force was rhythm, repetition and the sensation of space that falls between beats. The main reason for this was that drums and percussion instruments played a far more active role than before.

Any consideration of the relationship between musical process and nature must include the idea of cyclical rhythm. So it's no surprise to find many examples in Ultima's programme where percussion and rhythm are in focus. From the 1950s onwards, percussion began to take on a more important position in the work of academically respected composers like Messiaen, Varèse, Boulez, Cage, Xenakis and Stockhausen. Messiaen's opening piece, *Turangalila-Symphonie*, features a massive, often brutal percussion section that is occasionally allowed to sound out by itself as the rest of the orchestra falls silent. Harry Partch's *And On the Seventh Day Petals Fell on Petaluma* (1964) was partly a study for his heavily rhythmic opera/performance piece *Delusion of the Fury* (which appeared at Ultima in 2013). It is a showcase for his extraordinary

array of invented instruments, with the intricacy of a gamelan or ritual south east Asian court music. He stated that he used the piece to explore 'untried rhythms and polyrhythms', and at the same time, the various repeated rhythmic motifs in some personal way reflected small observations of daily life and nature around the town of Petaluma, California, where Partch had recently settled. So, for instance, at the work's premiere in 1966, he mentioned how 'it seems easier and more natural to observe small things, such as a fly getting dejected in a spiderweb in the corner.... This is a commentary on the instability of life in traps – for men and nations...'. The structure of *And On The Seventh Day...* is divided into twenty-three 'verses', each for a different combination of percussive or resonant devices such as the Zymo-Xyl, Blue Rainbow and Cloud-Chamber Bowls. While it's not a programmatic work, a sample of the titles Partch slapped onto these verses show that he was an eccentric observer of nature and biology: '4. An ant slept here, a spider died there'; '12. Pity! Pity! The white leghorn cockerel!'; '16. With crickets in the hedges'; '21. The egg is wondrous! 22. It desires only to get fertilised. 23. Stay tuned for biology'.

Harry Partch's outlook was forged during his hobo travels in the heat and dust of Depression-era America. His sound world was always connected more with the ground, physical nature and the mystical elements of earth, air, fire and water, than with the cosmic reaches of outer space. In the hands of different composers, percussive noises are by definition isolated sounds, which are appropriate for evoking the stars, points of light and galactic clouds visible in the night sky. A key work here is Xenakis's *Pléiades* (1979), in which the composer discovered the concept of repeated beats as rhythmic atoms, and subjected them to increasing degrees of variation. 'Still greater variations of an even greater complexity', wrote Xenakis, 'lead to total arrhythm, to a massy awareness of the event, to notions of clouds, nebulas, galaxies of the fragmented dust of beats organised by the rhythm.' In the comet-tail of works like this and the equally massive *ST/48*, comes the piece played by Pinguins and SISU at Ultima 2015, Gerard Grisey's *Le Noir de L'Etoile* (1989–90). Enormous in scope, and composed using radio signals from rotating pulsars, it

is an attempt to evoke the unimaginable distances of space and the gravitational suction of black holes using nothing but beaten objects. Its method is to make the concert space a kind of universe, or galaxy in itself, placing the players in orbit around the audience. In Grisey's epic work, drums ring out and solid bodies scrape against the blackness of silence, and we are forced to contemplate the existence of infinite rhythmic time cycles too large or complex for human perception to apprehend.

German composer Mathias Spahlinger has also written many works featuring percussion, including *Éphémère* (1977), notorious for its lengthy passage where nothing else happens other than slowly repeated strikes on a snare drum, and *ausnahmslos ausnahmen* (2014), for solo drum kit. His new works premiered at Ultima by asamisimasa – *10 – Nachstück mit sonne* and another as yet untitled new work – continue his pre-occupation with breaking down ordered systems, channelled via discrete moments of chaos and structured pulse. Language – the one phenomenon that sets humans apart from the rest of the natural world – was turned upside down in the dada poetry of Kurt Schwitters. His *Ursonate* (1923–32) atomised speech into a sequence of abstract sounds without reference to recognisable language – a pre-linguistic barrage of sounds made with the mouth. Schwitters is celebrated by the group Building Instrument at Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter during Ultima, but similar connections between the body, sound and rhythm patterning are further explored in other projects throughout the festival. Kola Nikoladze's *Sound Stencil* creates a kind of human drum machine from percussionists who use smartphones for synchronisation. The phones deliver a synchronised audio score, which dictates various rhythmical patterns and gives them directions. The percussionists move around the streets, striking various objects and landmarks as they go, encouraging members of the public to interrupt their routine and follow the noise. These impromptu actions create a strange disruption in the familiar rhythms of the city.

The rhythms of the human body – or more accurately, using rhythm to persuade the human body to achieve its limits – is a key factor in *The Dog Days Are Over*, a dance piece by Belgian choreographer Jan Martens. By restricting the dancers to doing nothing except jump up and down in complex, repetitive patterns, he pushes the human body to its limits in terms of both physical exhaustion and mental concentration. Holding the proscribed rhythm requires not switching off but engaging all faculties to maintain the highest levels of exertion. The sharpness of rhythm is intensified when it engages more senses than just hearing. Several works presented at Ultima this year combine sound and light in striking combinations: Alexander Schubert's *Sensate Focus* (2014) is concerned with the interplay between sound and image, and adds light as a fifth performer to a quartet of musicians. In a setting resembling a controlled psychiatric experiment, a

strobe light flashes in direct synchronisation with the sounds of instruments, confusing the brain's natural tendency to hear a flowing continuity between musical elements. Double Vision, the audio-visual duo of Robin Fox and Atom™, employ another synaesthetic approach as they subvert digital dance rhythms with multicoloured precision-engineered laser beams. And Georg Friedrich Haas's *In Vain* (2000–02) takes the entire concert hall on a literal journey to a dark night of the soul, as the lights are slowly dimmed and both audience and orchestra are immersed in total blackness. Haas as a composer has used the 'beats' vibrating between closely matched frequencies as musical material, and has also spoken of constructing scales in the form of a continuously ascending and descending spiral, so his work is riddled with naturally occurring rhythms and pulses at all levels.

The French inventor of musique concrète, Pierre Schaeffer, whose work is celebrated in Ultima's tribute to the GRM organisation, once speculated that the classical orchestra could

be reduced to the status of 'a primitive drum in the age of atomic theory'. The new sounds he uncovered and manipulated via physical means and electrical devices revealed entire new conceptions of time, space and rhythm. 'Science accustoms minds to think the unthinkable,' he went on. 'It familiarises them not only with dimensions inaccessible to our senses, but even with the fact that the rhythm of the world, physical time, is not the rhythm of the metronome or the biceps. Perhaps it would be a good thing if music, if it still aims to speak the somewhat mysterious language of the gods, turned its mind to more arduous, and above all more objective, constructions?'

'The relationship between musical process and nature must include the idea of cyclical rhythm'

Concrète mixture INA GRM

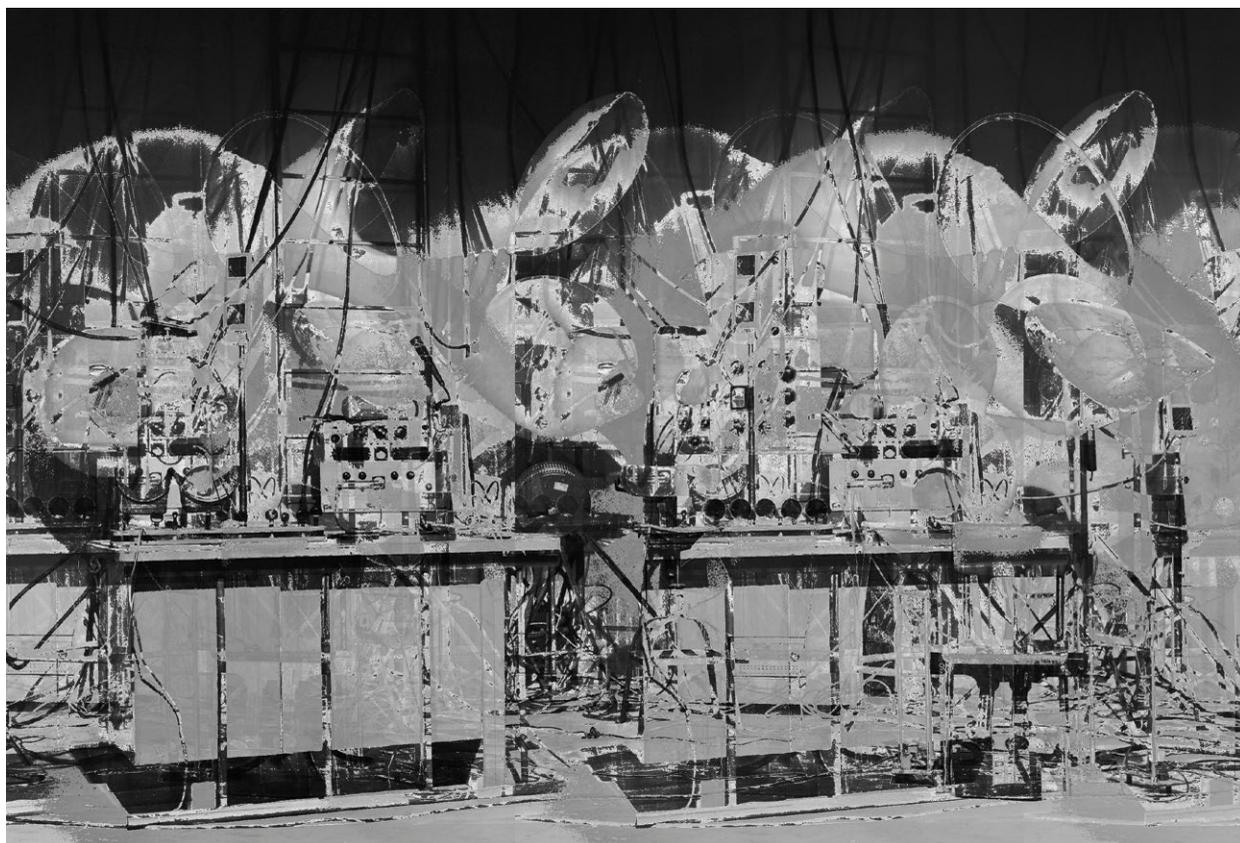


Photo Lazlo Ruska (m)

Pierre Schaeffer *Cinq Études de Bruits*
 Bernard Parmegiani *De Natura Sonorum*
 Luc Ferrari *Presque Rien no 2:*
Ainsi continue la nuit dans ma tête multiple
 Régis Renouard Larivière *Contrée*
 Kassel Jaeger *Campo Del Cielo*
 Espen Sommer Eide *The remarkable*
features of mosquito hearing (WP)

INA GRM

Vulkan Arena
 9pm
 kr. 200/100,-

Since its establishment in Paris in 1958, the GRM (Groupe de Recherches Musicales) has driven developments in musique concrète and electroacoustic music, expanding outwards from the radical vinyl and tape manipulations of its founder Pierre Schaeffer. The GRM has become an international magnet for composers seeking new expressiveness in electronic music and transformed sound. In tribute to GRM's achievements, Ultima presents an evening mixing French musique concrète classics with new work by a younger generation of sonic explorers.

Pierre Schaeffer (1910–92) began his experiments recording and manipulating noises and found sounds in Paris in 1948. The *Cinq Études de Bruits* were the first official 'opus' of musique concrète, first performed for a radio broadcast. It consists of five short 'noise studies' created from the sounds of percussion, an old piano, organ pipes rescued from a bombed cathedral, and most famously, the *Étude aux Chemins de Fer*, assembled from the sounds of steam engines.

Bernard Parmegiani (1927–2013) was one of Schaeffer's younger students and *De Natura Sonorum* (1975) is his electronic masterpiece, marking a new phase in his work where he tried to combine and contrast sounds to observe their nature. It exists in a state of continuous metamorphosis, generating the artificial from the natural. 'Does listening to this constant transition from one state to another tell us anything about the nature of sound?' asked the composer. The piece is divided into twelve sections. Number three, 'A Geological Sonority', resembles flying over a landscape, as electronic and instrumental sounds become confused, as if viewed from a great height. Number five is an elastic study, featuring the vibrations of skins and strings. The second half is more electronic, with sounds broken down to individual molecules. The result, according to the French critic Bernard Noël, is 'Music that awakens the liveliness in

Lunchtime concert

Microtub

Robin Hayward, Peder Simonsen,
 Martin Taxt

Loffet
 12 noon
 kr. 50,-

Microtub began as possibly the only trio of improvising microtonal tuba players in existence. With the departure of Kristoffer Lo, the Berlin based British blower Robin Hayward and Norway's Martin Taxt have recently been joined by Peder Simonsen, a Norwegian also based in Berlin. In this daytime concert they will perform selections from their recent acclaimed album *Star System* (SOFA Records 2014), which was described by one English writer as sounding 'like the doors of the underworld slamming'. If you thought you knew what a tuba could do, think again: this is a sound of flux, layers, drones and subliminal frequencies.

François Bonnet *Live Jukebox*

nyMusikk
 3pm
 Free

François Bonnet's illustrated talk on the history and pioneering impact of Groupe de Recherches Musicales.

Since 1958, the GRM has driven developments in musique concrète and electroacoustic music, and has become an international magnet for composers seeking new expressiveness in electronic music and transformed sound.

In collaboration with nyMusikk

SOFA so good

15 year anniversary/album release



Mural (m)

Mural
Keith Rowe & John Tilbury

Nasjonal jazzscene
7pm
kr. 200 / 100,-

The musician-run record label SOFA celebrates its 15th anniversary with a double album release during Ultima. Since 2000, Martin Taxt, Kim Myhr, Ingar Zach and Ivar Grydeland have clocked up around 50 releases in a broad range of experimental music, and they show no signs of slowing down. At Ultima, albums will be launched by British improvisers Keith Rowe & John Tilbury, and improv group Mural. Both ensembles collaborate with painter Kjell Bjørgeengen for their visual style. Keith Rowe (guitar, electronics) and John Tilbury (piano) are legendary figures in improvised music, and are particularly known for their work in Cornelius Cardew's Scratch Orchestra, free music group AMM, and the electroacoustic outfit

MIMEO. Tilbury is also one of the world's foremost interpreters of the piano music of American composer Morton Feldman. Tabletop guitarist Rowe is often described as the godfather of EAI (electroacoustic improvisation). enough still not know is a four-CD set of improvised music, though it bears the mark of long-time collaboration between these two musicians.

Mural consists of SOFA's own Ingar Zach and Kim Myhr, in a trio with Australian wind player Jim Denley. The band has been going since 2007, and their triple CD *Tempo* is a recording of a four-hour concert given in the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas.

AW

Produced by Nasjonal jazzscene

The struggle continues

Georg Friedrich Haas / Ensemble Ernst



Photo Substantia Jones (m)

Georg Friedrich Haas *In Vain*

Ensemble Ernst
Conductor Thomas Rimul

Riksscenen
9pm
kr. 200/100,-

Georg Friedrich Haas's *In Vain* (2000) is one of the most renowned and ambitious works in our time. A performance involves 24 musicians and a concert hall that's periodically plunged into darkness. It shifts between translucent shimmering and merciless power on the verge of noise, yet it always retains a sense of incomprehensible beauty. The composer makes the tempered tones slowly yield to microtonality and overtone techniques based on spectral music. The emotional triggers strewn throughout the 70 minute work never let the dramatic curve slacken.

The title alludes to the musical development in the work, but also the growth of the far right movement Haas observed during the 1999 elections in Austria. From

this perspective, the work as well as the title allude to despair caused by the possibility that Europe may once again be moving towards a form of fascism thought to belong to the past, in a cycle of inevitability. The great idea about the sublimely beautiful may turn out to be just another futile utopia. Ensemble Ernst is at the forefront of Nordic contemporary music ensembles. The ensemble actively promotes new music and modern classics.

MO

James Hoff, Afrikan Sciences / PAN Hilde Holsen

James Hoff / Afrikan Sciences / Hilde Holsen

Blå
10pm
kr. 200 / 100,-

Ultima presents a triple bill hosted by the Berlin-based PAN label. Run by US musician Bill Kouligas (Hiss Golden Messenger), PAN has become one of the most challenging and critically acclaimed labels within electronic and experimental music. Afrikan Sciences from Brooklyn and James Hoff are responsible for some of the imprint's best known records.

Afrikan Sciences (Eric Douglas Porter) has a broad musical background and is best known for his polyrhythmic and complex melodies in a crossover between afro-futurism, science fiction, hip hop, jazz and house. His most recent album *Circuitous* (2014) once again proves that he is an artist who transcends club music and dares enter the unknown. His live performances typically combine double bass, turntables and

electronic effects. New York-based artist James Hoff works across multiple platforms, as a painter, editor and publisher of Primary Information (a press devoted to publishing artists' books and reprinting out-of-print editions), writer, lecturer and musical composer. He didn't have a lot of musical experience when he made his 2011 debut with *How Wheeling Feels When the Ground Walks Away*, based on field recordings from several insurgencies in Europe and South America. His latest album, *Blaster* (2014), explores an interest in computer viruses. By infecting sound files with the so-called Blaster virus, he laid the groundwork for his own interpretation of the term dance music.

The Norwegian musician Hilde Holsen will be first to perform. She recently played her transmuted trumpet to a packed church in Oslo as part of the Only Connect festival. Improvising and processing her horn in real time, she shapes sonic landscapes that are glowing, harmonious and melancholic.

In collaboration with nyMusikk

RY

Lunchtime concert



Photo Thomas Klausner (m)

Gobi Drab

Loffet
12 noon
kr. 50,-

Gobi Drab is a recorder performer who connects free improvisation with the rhetorics of early music and the intricate structures of contemporary music in her music. She is a co-founder of 'snim – spontaneous network for improvised music' and member of PLENUM, a Paetzold recorder ensemble. In her composition *glass eye I-II-III*, written in 2015, she explores the acoustic textures, possibilities and impossibilities of her instruments.

She will also perform Swedish composer Ansgar Beste's *Dialogues Sauvages* (2013-14) for (hyper-)prepared Paetzold square bass recorder, a virtuoso solo work that produces 'sounds you've never heard on a wind instrument'.

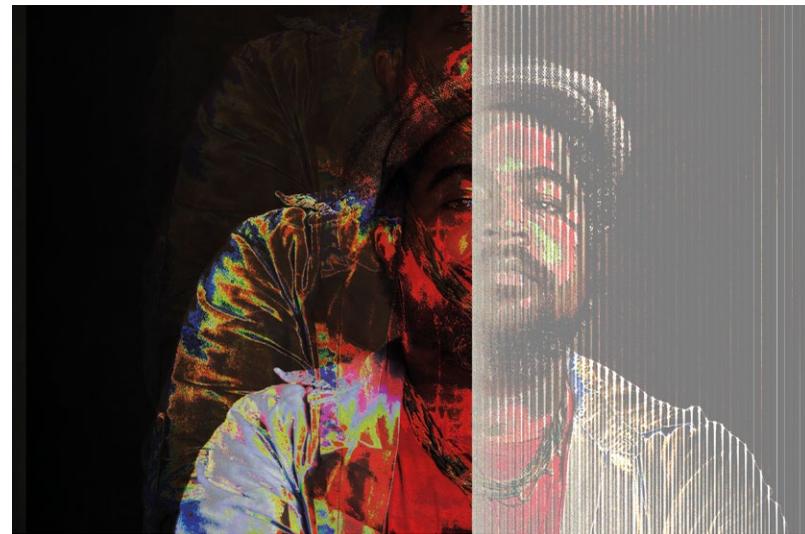


Photo Celeste Stoman (m)

Fiddles in your face Sigurd Johan Heide

Sigurd Johan Heide *Ang*

Riksscenen
8pm
kr. 200 / 150,-

Ang is a concert and choreographed performance initiated and directed by Tromsø based artist Sigurd Johan Heide. In a dynamic interaction between six traditional Hardang fiddle players and the interior space of the Riksscenen, the performers adapt their movements and actions around their real time interactions with the audience. With the lights dimmed, and chairs scattered around the space, the players test the limits of how intimate they can get with individual members of the public, while playing a combination of traditional Scandinavian folk music interspersed with moments of silence. The Hardanger fiddle players are Jan Beitoaugen Granli, Nina Fjeldet, Bjørn Kåre Odde, Hans Kjørstad, Guro Kvifte Nesheim and Torkjel Bruland Lavoll.

Produsert av Riksscenen

Composer—Øystein Figenschou (Ang) and Nina Fjeldet (mazarcka)
Host and concept—Sigurd Johan Heide
Supported by Arts Council Norway, DanseFestival Barents, Folkemusikk Nord and Riksscenen (Norwegian Hub for Traditional Music and Dance).

Evolutionary musical Annie Dorsen

Annie Dorsen *Yesterday Tomorrow*

Black Box Teater
7pm
kr. 240 / 100,-

Also 19 September, 6pm

Annie Dorsen's *Yesterday Tomorrow* is a musical that breaks most of the rules for this genre. Unlike traditional musicals, the music for this show is created during the course of the performance with the help of computer-generated algorithms, which means that the final result is different every time. The only points of reference are two well-known popular songs: 'Yesterday' by The Beatles and 'Tomorrow' by the musical *Annie*.

Based on evolutionary processes such as mutation and natural selection, the algorithms determine the most appropriate route from the first song to the next, or from what has passed to what is to come. As a result, the performance stands as an expression of the unpredictable nature of the present, as a contrast to a familiar past and the notion of a happy future. The music is performed by three singers who continually receive information about which rhythm, pitch and lyrics to sing. The result is an intelligent, humorous yet disturbing encounter between man and machine.

Annie Dorsen has previously worked in film, dance and theatre, and in recent years has been particularly interested in artificial intelligence and digital performance. The *Yesterday Tomorrow* project was developed in cooperation with Pierre Godard and Greg Bellar from IRCAM.

sw

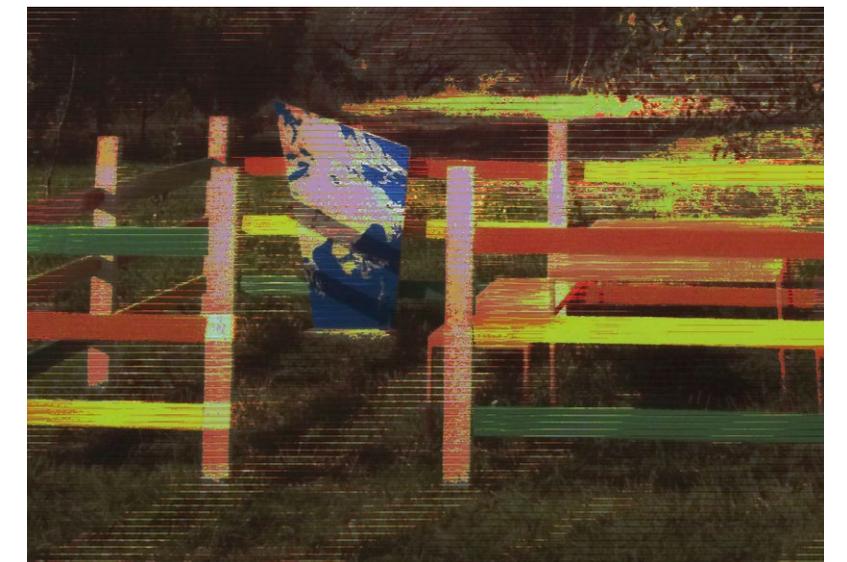


Photo Roland Rauschmeier (m)

Concept, direction—Annie Dorsen.
Music director—Joanna Bailie. Algorithm design—Pierre Godard. Sound design—Greg Bellar. Video systems design—Ryan Holsopple. Lighting design and technical direction—Bruno Pocheron, Ruth Waldeyer. Producer—Alexandra Rosenberg. Performers—Allison Chinn, Jeffrey Gavett & Natalie Raybould. Co-production—Holland Festival.

Black Box Teater. Performance Space 122. La Villette – Résidences d'Artistes 2015. L'Hippodrome, scène nationale de Douai, Théâtre de Gennevilliers with Festival d'automne à Paris, Le Maillon-Wacken – Scène européenne – Strasbourg, théâtre Garonne – Scène européenne – Toulouse. Supported by—Mount Tremper Arts, Abrons Arts Center, New York State Council on the Arts.

Ancestral voices

Anna Thorvaldsdottir



Photo Far North (m)

Anna Tryggvadóttir *UR_*

The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet –
Scene 2

7:30pm
kr. 350 / 250,-

Pre-talk at the Flagstad room 6pm

Also performed September 19, 6:30pm

In a world about to meet its end, the last humans live in uncertainty without any will to take risks, fed up with life. All they're looking for is the next level of comfort and safety. Just then a primal scream, a prehistoric sound emerges from the blue-green glaciers on Greenland – man's most profound origin is calling out to the decadent core of humanity.

Iceland's Anna Thorvaldsdottir has become something of a star within contemporary music. Her collaboration with director Thorleifur Örn Arnarsson and artist Anna Tryggvadottir has resulted in a performance where the human place in the world and time are set in perspective. While the slow meltdown of the glaciers highlights urgent global challenges, Thorvaldsdottir's colorful musical language transforms into something more abstract:

'Touching and movement are essential. The musical touch relates the way a central force is being transferred from one performer to the next,' she says about the music.

UR_ is a work for three voices, an actor, a grand piano and an ensemble of twelve performers. Thorvaldsdottir also uses her music to shine a light on current political issues. Most people agree that climate change is man-made, but there is change going the other way as well – the climate and natural evolution exerts an influence on human beings. The interaction is complex, but Thorvaldsdottir's ambitious music illustrates the relationship

between very general, global challenges and quite specific human emotions.

The title *UR_* has several connotations, as it may mean 'original' as in a first cause, a force of nature that was present before everything became what it is now. But in the old Norse languages, *ur* also meant rock, and was a common suffix as well. It's still in use in Icelandic.

Thorvaldsdottir has made her mark as an important voice in contemporary music, and as she often works with sizeable orchestral music, long intonations and a diverse set of instruments, she is able to conjure up a dynamic landscape with ample room for interpretation. The young Icelandic composer was the 2012 recipient of the prestigious Music Award from the Nordic Council, and her most recent album *Aerial* (Deutsche Grammophon) was met with rave reviews (it featured among the *New Yorker's* 'Best Music of 2014'). She often works with sonic structures on a grand scale that stirs associations with landscape and nature.

UR_ is a result of the artistic network Far North, and was developed in a two year timespan during gatherings on Greenland, Iceland, in Norway and Germany.

UR_ is also the title of a book, in which Mette Karlsvik expands on the libretto she wrote together with Thorvaldsdottir. Karlsvik is an award-winning author, and her poem *UR* is a story about origins. MØ

In collaboration with The Norwegian Opera & Ballet

Composer— Anna Thorvaldsdottir
Director— Thorleifur Örn Arnarsson
Visual artist— Anna Rún Tryggvadóttir
Text— Anna Thorvaldsdottir and Mette Karlsvik
Conductor— Bjarni Frimann Bjarnason
Musical supervision Baldur Brönnimann and Bjarni Frimann Bjarnason
Performers— Sofia Jernberg, Mike Philip Fencker Thomsen, Melis Jaatinen, Joa Helgesson, Tinna Thorsteinsdóttir, BIT20 Ensemble

Partners— Theater Trier, Germany, Dark Music Days Reykjavík, The National Theatre of Greenland, Sound of Stockholm and The International Vadstena Academy.

Supported by the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation

Lunchtime concert

Frevo Gitarduo

Loffet
12 noon
kr. 50,-

'How do you get two guitar players to play in perfect unison?' A: 'Shoot one!'

Frevo Gitarduo consists of the two Norwegian guitarists Pål Granum and Andreas Karlsen, who began playing together in 1995. During their time as a duo, they have accumulated a broad repertoire of works for two guitars. They have also premiered several works by Nordic composers.

Armed only with various guitars and electronics, Frevo will deliver a high-tech guitar duel performance when they take the stage at Ultima. They will be performing new works by Peter Jakober, Evan Gardner, Herman Vogt and Therese Birkelund Ulvo.

The microtonal guitar

Zwerm

Matthew Shlomowitz
The Major Sevenths Medley
 Thomas Bendsorp *Jongens*
 Mauro Pawlowski *Als Mens Vermomd*
 Bjørn Fongaard *Sinfonia Microtonalis #1*
 and #2 + *Aforismer* op. 63

Zwerm / Anders Førisdal

Norges musikkhøgskole / Levinsalen
 6pm
 kr. 200 / 100,-

Anders Førisdal joins forces with Dutch-Belgian guitar quartet Zwerm.

At Ultima their programme will consist of early Norwegian experimental music by Bjørn Fongaard (1919–80). *Sinfonia Microtonalis* and *Aforismer* are key works in Fongaard's extensive catalogue, in which his microtonal guitar plays a vital role.

Since 2007, Zwerm has been attracting increasing attention for its projects, such as performing as a street parade band or playing brutal noise rock. With a generous dose of central European humour, the group has a long list of releases to its credit, among them *The World's Longest Melody*.

They will also perform *The Major Sevenths Medley*, a greatest-hits ode to Matthew Shlomowitz's imaginary band. *Jongens* is the title of one of Zwerm's early albums, and 25 years on, Dutch composer Thomas Bendsorp has written his own composition of those recordings. *Als mens vermomd* means 'disguised as a human', and deals with a stray alien, written by dEUS member Mauro Pawlowski. sw

In collaboration with Gaudeamus Muziekweek

Norwegian opéra

Trond Reinholdtsen



Photo Trond Reinholdtsen (m)

Trond Reinholdtsen Ø (WP)

Venue will be announced at ultima.no
 10pm
 kr. 100,-

A film premiere with a difference. At his current hideout in Värmland, Sweden, where for the past two years he has been developing an alternative 'Norwegian Opra House', Trond Reinholdtsen has made a series of 'opra films' entitled Ø, four of which will be premiered at a special screening event at Ultima.

Trond Reinholdtsen founded his own opera house, the Norwegian Opra, in 2009, with the motto 'the birth of opera amid the crisis of contemporary music'. It was a small-scale Bayreuth scaled down to the size of Reinholdtsen's living room. In fact, it was his living room: A dingy apartment in a run-down quarter of Oslo. The Norwegian Opra was a means of seizing the means of production, in which its founder

was also the dictatorial opera director, the composer of all works, as well as the librettist, director, Heldentenor, scenographer, propaganda minister, web designer, ticket master, cleaning assistant, conceptual consultant, head of the Worker's Union, restaurant chief, etc.

Reinholdtsen's opras have returned to grand narratives and ur-mythologies (*Orpheus, The Apocalypse, Utopias, Narcissus*) as a response to a perceived gentrification and fussiness in contemporary music. The participation of non-professionals ensure a constant sensation of teetering on the brink of disaster and chaos. This film premiere will be an opportunity to sample what he and his guerrilla group have been cooking up in their Swedish hideaway: A mixture of dystopian science fiction, verismo, communist propaganda, outdated existentialism and juicy autobiography. 'In other words,' teases Reinholdtsen, 'a little like *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.'

RY

Darwin's lamentation

The Norwegian Soloists' Choir



Photo Bjørn Bertheussen *Det Norske Solistkor* (m)

Jan Erik Mikalsen *Sonette for Choir* (WP)
 Edvin Østergaard
Darwin's Lamentation (WP)
 Edvin Østergaard *Unpredictable Moments*
 Maja Linderøth
Sonatform denaturerad prosa

Norwegian Soloists' Choir

Universitetets gamle festsal
 1pm
 kr. 200 / 100,-

Sonette for Choir by Jan Erik Mikalsen was completed earlier this year and will now have its first performance at Ultima. The work is inspired by Rainer Maria Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* from 1922, based on the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Mikalsen has received numerous awards and was named INTR composer for 2014–16. What is the connection between the eureka-experience of the scientist, the one that leads to the radical breakthrough, and the creative process of the artist? And how can and the same idea be expressed differently in art and in science? This is the question Edvin Østergaard explores in the choral work *Unpredictable Moments*. Besides being a composer, Østergaard is a professor at

the Norwegian University of Life Sciences and has for years been interested in the interface between art and science. In Maja Linderøth's *Sonatform denaturerad prosa*, based on Swedish poet Gunnar Eklöf's text of the same title, language's limits and components are explored. Linderøth is studying composition at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo. Following its premiere at the Academy in March 2015, the work has also been performed in Groningen by the Norwegian Soloists' Choir.

All three works will be performed by the Norwegian Soloists' Choir under the direction of conductor Grete Pedersen, and will be introduced by scientist and industrial entrepreneur Alf Bjørseth. sw

Produced by The Norwegian Soloists' Choir

Digital pastoralia

Kringkastingorkestret

Jon Øivind Ness *Mørkgånga* (WP)
 Øyvind Torvund *Idyllic Scenes* (WP)
 Iannis Xenakis *ST/48*

KORK (Norwegian Radio Orchestra)
 Conductor: Thomas Rimul

Great Hall, University of Oslo
 3pm
 kr: 200 / 100,-



Photo Blunderbuss NRK (m)

Øyvind Torvund and Jon Øivind Ness use nature as the starting point both for their work and for their open and associative titles. During *Ultima*, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra will give first performances of new orchestral works by these composers, in which they explore musical landscapes as theme and method: Jon Øivind Ness's *Mørkgånga* is named after a ravine in Krokskogen, a woodland situated in the northwestern part of Oslomarka, the forest surrounding Oslo, while Øyvind Torvund's *Idyllic Scenes* depicts the composer's own impressionist landscape using orchestral and electronic music.

Mørkgånga is the latest in a series of works by Ness that originate in his own personal experiences of nature. It contains programmatic references to a native of Trøndelag county (the composer himself comes from North Trøndelag) in somewhat unpleasant encounters with hawks, vipers and wasps, presented in the format of a romantic, lightly humorous composition.

Idyllic Scenes, a title also used by Torvund in his vocal work *Wild Spaces*

(2008), depicts a more abstract musical landscape. References to late romantic and impressionist ideals are highlighted by atonal electronic and other stylistically contrasting elements. Combined, these fragments say something about the evolution of music from natural sounds to art.

Iannis Xenakis's *ST/48* (1962) is named after the number of performers of the work (48) and the software program which Xenakis developed on an IBM 7090 between 1956–62. Like much of Xenakis's works, the music in the *ST* series is stochastic, meaning that it is based on complex calculations of probability where the big picture is predictable but where the details are more random. This provides a structure that is more logical to the listener than pure serialism, at the same time as it allows the composer scope to make personal choices.

The Norwegian Radio Orchestra is the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's house orchestra. During the coming season this versatile unit will perform works by Mozart, Schubert and Chopin,

jazz classics with *Come Shine*, and folk songs with Bjørn Eidsvåg. It will also be the main orchestra during the Nobel Peace Prize concert and will be recording the soundtrack for *Pinchcliffe Grand Prix 2*.

MØ

Produced by KORK
 Supported by Arts Council Norway

Idyll speculations

Øyvind Torvund interview by Rob Young



Photo Vegar Valde (m)

Thinking about this year's Ultima theme, 'On Nature', what does the idea of Nature mean to you?

If I'm asked to consider nature as such, I think of something primal, something we both fear and admire. We may fear nature in the sense that the natural forces within ourselves can be frightening. The very opposite of civilized existence... So for me, the concept of nature encompasses the idea of something that cannot be controlled, something wild, as well.

Your new commission, Idyllic Scenes, comments on the rhapsodic image of nature as portrayed in late Romantic orchestral music...

I've been somewhat preoccupied with the way the picturesque has been presented in earlier symphonic tone poems and impressionist works, so for this piece I've assembled a number of 'archetypal' scenes or tableaux, and I've arranged them in

line one after the other. This concept of the idyll, and how to evoke it, interests me.

The picturesque idea is essential to our culture, the yearning for a heavenly existence, salvation, the absence of pain... The diverse ways composers like Mahler, Debussy, Ravel and Richard Strauss have depicted the idyllic have become musical clichés, not the least through film scores. I wanted to grasp all of this and use it as an overflowing collection of idylls, but with an explosive, unpolished layer.

Your previous works include Neon Forest Space and Forest Construction – why is this a recurring motif in your work?

The concept of music that emanates from the forest is definitely a recurring motif. This kind of proto-folk music has been an idea that has struck me several times. There's also an element of a proto-modernism that's hidden in the woods

somewhere... Just as the concept of archaic melodies is on my mind, I'm interested in the idea that there may be something like an 'archaic modernism', a tradition in abstract expression. In any case, I find the thought of an archaic version of what we call modernism fascinating.

I try to discover abstract structures in folk art and music, and maybe that's a somewhat contrived or quaint approach. But the notion that the abstract may be a symbol for the divine, an unfathomable or intangible aspect of life, has been present for a long time. So has the wishful thinking that our culture nurtures a certain respect for what we don't understand...

This thought experiment about an ur-modernism of the woods is something I have made use of in a number of works, where an ensemble on stage imitates abstract phrases from field recordings made in a forest. This is the same idea that becomes apparent in *Idyllic Scenes*. What you'll hear is abstract ensemble music in a forest, and the orchestra makes a live imitation. It may well be that the work approaches questions such as 'where does the language we use come from?'. When you find yourself rooted in a modernist composition heritage, the feeling of estrangement comes easily. You long for roots that stretch further back in time...

The usual definition of what place contemporary music is at right now, tends to draw a line from Palestrina to Stockhausen by way of Beethoven... so the need to explore the modernism of the woods arises...

Are you more interested in using natural processes in your composition, or investigating/interrogating previous artistic evocations of nature and 'the natural'?

I try to approach these ideas from several different directions, and a part of this is an interest in what has previously been done and considered by other people. I guess this becomes especially apparent in these idyll collections.

You have previously used field/actuality recordings of caged birds and animals in your compositions, 'transcribing' them just as Messiaen used to do with birds. What's your motivation for doing that?

Well, the foremost motivation is probably that animal vocalizations are the oldest music or sounds that we know of, together with the sounds of nature, such as wind, rain, thunder and so on.

But I can get interested in the idea of an imperfect imitation as well. Human beings are proficient when it comes to seeing and understanding things within their personal cultural context. When a musician imitates something, what you hear is something else as well, his or her language and culture-bound understanding. The interpretation gives it away. And regarding Olivier Messiaen: his bird notation pieces first and foremost sound like Messiaen. While the bird signatures obviously are discernible, the composer Messiaen and his musical expression takes centre stage, as if nature were a mirror in which to perceive his language of music.

When nature and music is discussed, landscape is often the first thing people think of. But natural processes involve cycles, rhythms, adaptations and catastrophes. As a composer, are you interested in making a music that would reflect that?

Absolutely. Nature shows no pity, and it is too grand for these concepts to be presented on stage without a visible form of reduction. I believe there are many artists who envy the forces of nature. Nature is awe-inspiring, and in some sense incomprehensible. In such a perspective the grandiosity in nature is something you would like to experience in art, or even achieve in your own art. On the other hand, you're happy to spend your evening snugly in your own house instead of drowning in glowing lava!

From an artistic point of view, is nature most interesting as a thing in itself, or as a cultural construction?

Both are interesting. If you think of nature as a landscape untouched by human hands, it may affect you in a way where you lose yourself, where the magnificence of nature takes over.

I'm interested in the way we confront concepts like 'the wilderness' and 'the unspoiled'. They're elements many of us look for in nature, yet they can be hard to face if they're found within ourselves, or within our society. What is 'the wild'?

It's hard to grasp, but it's certainly an attraction towards these properties in literature and art, but usually they're found in controlled forms, as if seen from a distance.

Dynamic uprisings Mia Habib

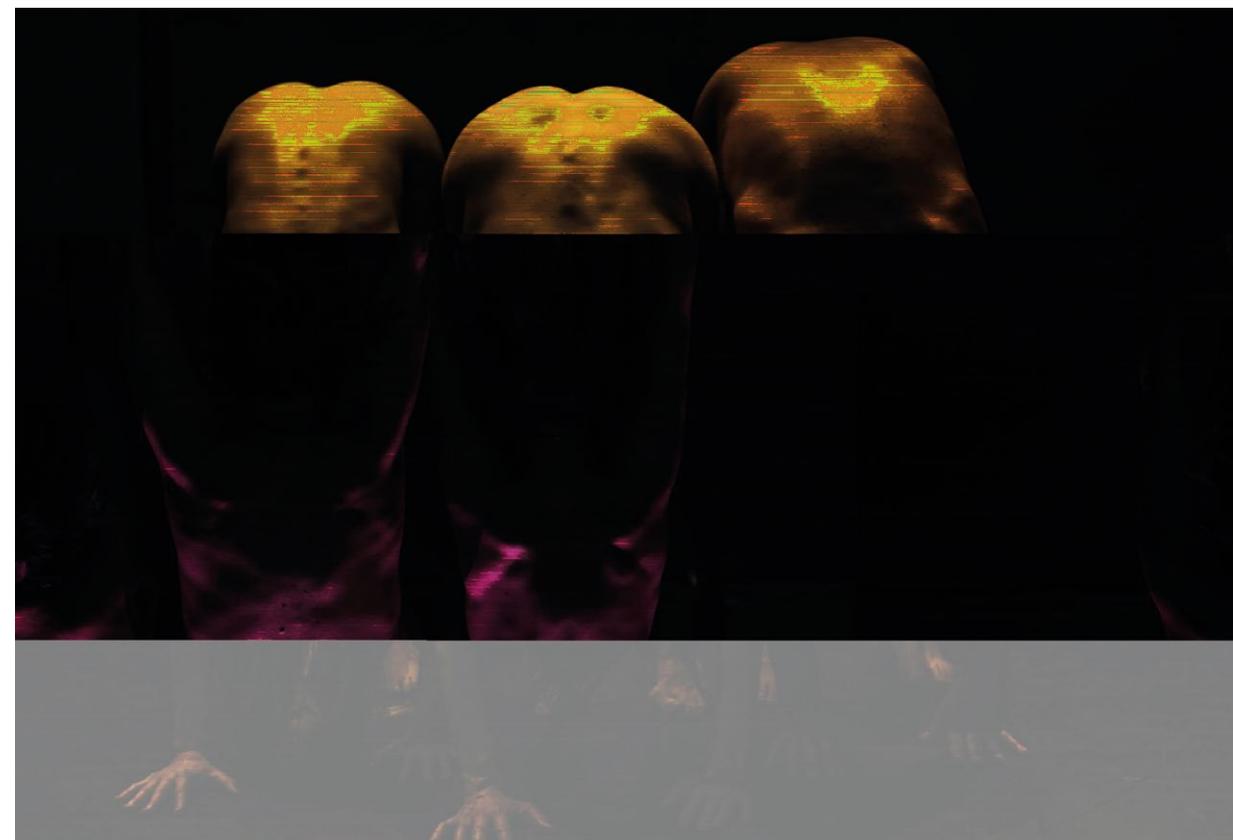


Photo Jon Filip Fahlstrom (m)

Mia Habib *A song to...*

Dansens Hus

7pm
kr. 290 / 170,-

Inspired by the works of Emanuel and Gustav Vigeland, Oslo-based choreographer Mia Habib explores how the monumental in art can manifest itself through dance and moving bodies. In the dance performance *A song to...*, the stage is filled with a swarm of naked bodies that move around the space in all kinds of ways. Inspired by the discipline Parkour, Habib's 18 dancers jump, climb, run, and

crawl across the stage manifesting the full register of human emotions and expressions. In doing so, the dancers create an image of all of mankind. Habib also explores the choreographic potential in mass protests and political protest movements, where people gather around a common goal, and how this contrasts with the individual's perception of himself as something vulnerable and monumental.

Habib received her training as a choreographer from the Oslo National Academy of the Arts and holds a master's degree in conflict resolution and negotiation from Tel Aviv University. She also runs Mia Habib Productions, which is involved in stage art, curating, lectures, teaching and mentoring.

Choreography—Mia Habib
Produced by—Mia Habib Productions
Dramaturgy—Jassem Hindi
Light design—Ingeborg Olerud
Sound/sound mix—Jassem Hindi
Choreography assistant—Jon Filip Fahlstrom
Dancers—Cecilie Lindemann Steen, Ingunn Rimestad, Terje Tjøme Møssige, Jon Filip Fahlstrom, Loan Than Ha, Hanna Mjåvatn, Ida Gudbrandsen, Kira Senkpiel, Keyon Gaskin, Sandy Williams, Tarek Halaby, Fie Dam Mygind, Linn Christine Ragnarsson, Asaf Ahronson, Przybyslaw Paz, Povilas Bastys
Producer—Eva Grainger
Pre-production—Morten Kippe
International producer/Sales & Marketing—Karene Lyngholm
Insipient—Karen Høybakk Mikalsen
Video installation—Kaia Hugin
Photo—Jon Filip Fahlstrom

Co-produced by Dansens Hus, Theatre Freiburg, BIT Teatergarasjen, Berum Kulturhus – regional arena for samtidsdans, Carte Blanche

In cooperation with Dansarena Nord, SITE Sweden, Dans i Nord-Trøndelag, RAS Sandnes, Danshallerne, Bora Bora, Festiviteten Haugesund, Fjellansen, Vigelandsmuseet and Emanuel Vigeland Museum

Supported by Norsk Kulturråd, Fond for Lyd og Bilde, Nordisk Kulturfond.

Finale

André Bratten / Ole-Henrik Moe
Arvo Pärt

Arvo Pärt *Te Deum*
André Bratten / Ole-Henrik Moe
New work (WP)

Oslo Domkor & Ensemble Allegria

Oslo Cathedral
8pm
kr. 350 / 250,-



Photo Stephen-Butkus (m)

Ultima's closing concert this year features a mystical, minimalist masterpiece from Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, and a new large scale work by Norwegian electronic dance musician André Bratten in collaboration with composer and violinist Ole-Henrik Moe.

André Bratten has attracted considerable attention both in Norway and abroad for his elegant music, which lies somewhere between space disco and micro house. His debut album from 2013 received critical acclaim for its pure, well-rounded sounds and melodic synth lines. Bratten has a passion for contemporary music, and cites Giacinto Scelsi as his prime source of inspiration. Now, in collaboration with composer Ole-Henrik Moe, he has taken on the task of writing the music for Ultima's closing concert. Abandoning his usual synths and drum machines for classical instruments, field recordings and heavily processed sound landscapes, the slowly evolving, microtonal piece is divided into three 'movements' and is 'based on a quiet feeling of absence', according to

Bratten. The sustained, simple and meditative qualities of Arvo Pärt's *Te Deum* (1984) mark Pärt's distinctiveness as a composer. The work is written for choir, strings, piano and wind harp, which will be positioned surrounding the seated audience. *Te Deum*, also known as the Ambrosian Hymn, is one of Christianity's oldest and best-known hymns, and Pärt's setting recalls the simplicity of Gregorian chant, with an effect of intense meditation.

RY

In collaboration with Oslo Domkor

Biophony: Finding the True Sound of Nature

Bernie Krause

As a soundscape ecologist, I rarely use the word 'nature' in my work. The term itself separates us as humans from the living world we're trying to express. Most indigenous language groups with a living connection to the natural world have no word for what we in the West refer to as 'nature'. I grew up in a world that usually assessed everything from a *visual* perspective: Forests measured tree by tree and bird by bird. But I've learned that a much fuller understanding can be gained from what we *hear*, and by taking into account the dialect of entire ecosystems: biophonies, the signature voices of the natural world.

'Like much else in the human repertoire,' wrote Paul Shepard in *The Others: How Animals Made Us Human* (1996), 'music may have been already there when we arrived and its performance was everywhere audible and visible.' Shepard, a fine naturalist and professor of ecology, was not a musician. But he instinctively knew that creature vocalizations in wild habitats not only validate the presence of life, but their acoustic output was an ingredient essential to evolving human cultures.

In the late 1990s, an academic acquaintance visited Wild Sanctuary, our home in northern California's Valley of the Moon. During his visit he suggested that Olivier Messiaen's *Chronochromie* – a composition featuring transformations of the birdsong of several species he and his wife, Yvonne, had notated while hiking the forests of France – was a fine example of the human connection between music and 'nature'.

Shepard's argument had already motivated me to reconsider the associations between natural soundscapes and music and to dig a bit deeper – beyond what the well-established Western, academically-trained (mostly) male scholars and composers had been proposing as the origins of music for the past few centuries. So when our visitor suggested that Messiaen's work somehow related to 'nature', I blurted out, 'But surely you must know that Messiaen's work, however extraordinary, has *nothing* to do with the natural world!'

Momentarily taken aback, the visitor responded, 'Well, if you think that's true, why don't you write about it?' The challenge was so intriguing that I have spent the better part of the past two decades doing just that.

In my work, I record and study the sounds of organisms from microscopic to megafauna within their habitats. I evaluate the

acoustic expressions of life emanating from those biomes and our human effects on them. From the beginning, I suspected that the messages inherent within natural soundscapes were profoundly important – not only informing us about our musical origins, but many other disciplines as well. In a world otherwise illuminated by what we see, soundscapes began to expose even more surprises. For me, the link between wild soundscapes and music has, so far, yielded the most significant returns.

To city folk such as my own parents, the wild was at best a vague, incomprehensible abstraction; at worst, dangerous. Then, quite by accident, at the age of thirty I found myself recording soundscapes in a park north of San Francisco, for a collaboration with the Moog synthesizer pioneer Paul Beaver. *In A Wild Sanctuary* (Warner Brothers, 1970) was the first album of its kind to feature an ecological theme and included entire natural soundscapes as components of orchestration. The stereo sound of the redwood forest habitat transmitted through my headphones not only brought details of the biome more sharply into focus, but was greatly consoling at the same time. The combination of acoustic space interleaved with the burble of a nearby stream, the calls and pulsing wing-beats of a pair of ravens as they soared over the canopy above me, and the hushed ambience of ocean breezes wafting through the upper layers of treetops left me with the sense that I had finally unearthed a tranquil corner in an otherwise tumultuous world.

As with most professional musicians, I had been taught to *hear*, but not to really listen to the more subtle audio textures that lay beyond our limited urban and cultural worlds. To learn about that piece of the acoustic puzzle I had to venture far afield, deep into the heart of the natural world, many miles from human habitation and distractions. The wild, as Bill McKibben reminds us, is a place where one can walk for a week in any direction without encountering a road or a fence, where there is no signage, where there are no rangers eager to impart their knowledge of the life cycles of a bear or raptor, and, best of all, where there is nothing to buy. It was while encamped in those habitats that I began to understand that the collective sounds produced by non-human vocal organisms were formidable chronicles transmitting great quantities of useful data. In order to properly identify the general sources of sound and because there are so few words in our language to describe

the nuances, about a dozen years ago I embraced R. Murray Schafer's idea of the soundscape and fleshed it out, adding the terms *geophony*, *biophony* and *anthropophony*. Geophony is comprised of the non-biological signals that occur naturally, like the effect of wind in the trees, water in a stream, waves at the ocean shore, and movements of the earth (the first acoustic signals ever generated on Earth). Biophony is comprised of the collective signatures produced by all organisms in a given habitat at a particular time of day or night. And finally, anthropophony is made up of all the sounds we humans make. Some of them are controlled, like music, theatre or language, while a large proportion are made up of chaotic or incoherent signals generated by our electro-mechanical world – often referred to as noise.

But what is the connection between biophonies and music? Biophonies not only clearly express melody, harmony, rhythm and timbre, but also well-partitioned structures – precise arrangements that any academic music department would recognize as compositions. As I recorded more frequently in rainforests close to the equator, where the density and diversity of vocal species are highest, I found that when the biophonies were transformed into graphic illustrations, called spectrograms, they closely resembled contemporary musical scores, where the highest-sounding organisms were represented at the top of the page and the lowest-sounding creatures at the bottom. In each biome, insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals partition their voices, establishing distinctive acoustic niches – based on time or frequency – in which to vocalize. While the organizational models differ from place to place, the paradigm generally holds, even in temperate, sub-arctic and arctic regions of the planet. For signal-producing organisms, the evolution of acoustic and temporal niches is a solution that helps prevent one creature's voice from being masked by others. Because the arrangement into frequency and temporal niches closely resembles the manner in which instruments in an orchestra are scored, subsequent deduction revealed that it is precisely from these phenomena that we humans learned to structure sound; we created music by mimicking what we heard in the African forests and plains where we initially settled. This intersection leads us to define natural world soundscapes as *proto-music*.

From the 18th century, when Linnaeus began to deconstruct the natural world into its component parts, his methodology was so encompassing that it seeped into many layers of scientific and cultural expression. Museums began to collect and separate creatures completely out of context, studying and displaying them individually because it was easy and practical. Huge, well-known archives of individual bird, mammal, and frog recordings were established in both the US and the UK where natural world marvels were viewed piecemeal and expressed through an illusion of control, distortion, and schism. This reductionist and fragmented vision was adopted by composers working within the same occidental paradigms. Their manifestations of 'nature' were generally symbolized by the inclusion of the few signature bird, whale and/or wolf vocalizations, which continue to be expressed in the repertoire of many composers.

When I asked my Messiaen acquaintance why the composer dismissed the majority of birds that lived in those French forests, or why he never utilized the sound of a hippo or the

trumpet of an elephant in his compositions, he had no real answer. But I have come to believe that the kinds of abstraction most Western composers have exercised in the name of 'nature', only serve to underscore our detachment from a fundamentally distorted concept to begin with. To me, the single animal or species model is a bit like trying to understand the magnificence of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony by abstracting the voice of a single violin player out of the context of the orchestra and listening only to that one part. Indeed, of the approximately ten thousand identified bird species, only one hundred or so have ever been included in musical compositions of the West – less than .01 per cent (and most of those were used by Messiaen).

The idea of the wild is not well-served by the paradigms of fragmentation and abstraction we humans have imposed on the living world, either in science or through the prism of the sound arts. Biophonies are much more coherent and complex, even though we may not yet be able to recognize the intricate patterns that connect everything. So when the question arises as to what Messiaen's music has to do with 'nature', or more succinctly, the living world in which we are but one organism, the answer is, 'not much'. Nor, by the way, does the work of Mozart, or Beethoven, Sibelius, George Crumb, Alan Hovhanness, Paul Winter, Grofé, Rautavaara, Vivaldi, Ralph Vaughan Williams or Debussy – unless, of course, it is made to fit the same narrow, abstract, obsolete concept branded as 'nature'. Like many others in our field, they failed to grasp the idea, later expressed by John Cage, that in order to understand the living world we have to experience it in her own manner of operation. Moreover, even though their compositions may have been created with great skill and empathy, and may be celebrated as great music, their subtexts convey a profound disconnection from natural world phenomena.

Apart from the indigenous music of the Ba'Aka, Kaluli, the Jivaro, the Yoik singers, and the Pitjanjatjara, there are a few Western composers who are striving to address these issues in what is becoming a worldwide movement. Among them is David Monacchi, a composer and naturalist whose postmodern ecoacoustic compositions speak directly to this kind of inclusive thinking. Murray Schafer, who pioneered the compositional idea 30 years ago with his *Patria Series*, is another. John Luther Adams, the American composer from Alaska, who has written *Become Ocean* and *Inuksuit*, has incorporated impressions of entire soundscapes of the far north into his music.

As we are only now beginning to understand, if we want to express aspects of the wild, we, as composers, will have to understand and reflect more profoundly on our roles and place within a much more comprehensive ecosystem.

Bernie Krause is a soundscape ecologist, composer and founder of Wild Sanctuary (wildsanctuary.com). He is the author of *The Great Animal Orchestra: Finding the Origins of Music in the World's Wild Places* (Little Brown/Hachette, 2012). His Beaver & Krause duo (with Paul Beaver) released *The Nonesuch Guide to Electronic Music* (1967), *In A Wild Sanctuary* (1970), *Gandharva* (1971) and more, while he has released

nearly 50 CDs featuring soundscapes from around the planet. His *The Great Animal Orchestra: Symphony for Orchestra and Wild Soundscapes* was released on Nimbus in 2014, and his new book, *Voices Of The Wild: Animal Songs, Human Din, And The Call To Save Natural Soundscapes*, is published this year by Yale University Press.