

LIMINA 2023

Contemporary Music Festival
29.11.–1.12. • Salzburg

Ensemble Adapter

1.12.2023

20:00 Uhr

Solitär

Universität Mozarteum
Mirabellplatz 1

Programm

Jake Adams	<i>Apeirogen</i> (UA)
Sonia Loenne	<i>Disagreeing Over Fruit and A Lost Spaceship</i> (UA)
Beata Juchnevič	<i>Sleeping with Sirens</i> (UA)
Natacha Diels	<i>Sad Music for Lonely People</i> (2019)
Ynyr Pritchard	<i>grrrrrrrrrr, bby</i> (UA)

Ensemble Adapter (DE)

Performers: Gunnhildur Einarsdóttir (Harp), Seth Josel (E-Guitar),
Matthias Engler (Percussion)

Jake Adams

Apeirogen

An apeirogen is a theoretical polygon with an infinite number of sides. The idea of viewing this shape from every possible angle inspired the composition of this piece, where many viewpoints are given on the same musical material.

Apeirogen is a sequel piece to my previous work *The End of a Circle*, expanding on the idea of a spectrum of tuning to connect different tuning systems. In the case of *Apeirogen*, the guitar and harp are both retuned based on the tuning of Gamelan Sekar Petak's slendro set of instruments, though with slight quirks based on how each instrument is played. The percussion meanwhile remains firmly within equal temperament. These three tunings are connected by the electronics, which is the only instrument which can perform in all three tuning systems simultaneously. The concept of irama found in Javanese gamelan music is key to the form of this piece, with the core melody slowly being stretched out resulting in changes in the tempo/density relationships within the material.

Sonia Loenne

Disagreeing over fruit and a lost space ship

Disagreeing over fruit and a lost space ship is a piece about whether Kiwi (the fruit) has a strong smell and whether Matthias owns a space ship or not. In short, it is a piece about accepting dissent. Agreeing to disagree and then still going out to dinner together.

Beata Juchnevič

Sleeping With Sirens

My piece *Sleeping With Sirens* is inspired by a short story *Music In Their Eyes* from a collection *Mermaids* (liet. Undinės) by Lithuanian writer Jurga Tumasonytė. I wanted to create and explore the dark atmosphere of the lake inhabited by mermaids and the dangerous nature of human beings intruding into a world that was not meant for them. So, I chose the juxtaposition of tone and noise as symbols of mermaids and the scientists who study and capture them.

Natacha Diels

Sad Music for Lonely People

You with the sad heart

Keep your eyes shut

I see your true colors shining through (1)

Don't cry, just stand up straight

Sometimes life can be a lonely dance.

You, are very special.

Inside your head, there's a record playing

Embrace the fact that after the amputation, comes the boredom.

It's so hard to dance that way, when it's cold, and there's no music. (2)

Isn't it kind of obvious that flowers are flowers because they are not real?

And as we wind on down the road,

We cannot find new ways of burning each other, we can just find new ways of talking to ourselves.

Our shadows taller than our souls,

Humanity is so beautiful.

There walks a lady we all know

Keep on crying

Who shines white light and wants to show

Sadness is to imagine

How everything still turns to gold. (3)

Life's now (4)

(1) Billy Steinberg / Tom Kelly, Cyndi Lauper, *True Colors*

(2) Tom Waits, *Hold On*

(3) Jimmy Page/Robert Plant, Led Zeppelin, *Stairway to Heaven*

(4) inspirobot.com

Ynyr Pritchard

grrrrrrrrrr, bby

The line-up of Harp, Percussion and Electric Guitar was an immediately intriguing instrumentation, my first reaction being that these were three instruments which had heavily gendered ideas attached to them. In their own ways, it also felt that they had extremely interesting positions in terms of conformity and rebellion, their political identities not being as clear cut as the knee-jerk reaction might assume. What does performing these instruments mean? Does it matter what the gender is of a person playing these instruments? How do our reactions change depending on the gender of that person? Are these instruments of compliance or protest? *grrrrrrrrrr, bby* tries to ask these questions and I'm not completely certain if there are actually any answers in the piece.

I started having ideas for the piece around the same time as I was introduced to Suzanne Cusick's analysis of Fanny Hensel's Piano Trio, an analysis which approached the work in part as a record of the expected genders of the musicians and music and the relationships between those players. This analysis really solidified ideas I'd been thinking about for a while, especially in terms of how to approach a score, notation and the relationships between players. I have been getting more and more interested in the concepts of written music as a series of performance instructions rather than catalogues of sonic outcomes and after writing a piece which went far in one direction (where I ended up not notating anything more than the text and suggested durations, which of course isn't anything crazy but was quite far from my usual practice) I wanted to try and approach some kind of music theatre where a large part of the performativity came from the interaction between the player and the information they're presented with while giving them space to perform 'themselves'. Therefore, when this wish was combined with an increased interest in discussions around gender, especially in terms of Cusick and gender in and out of the Western Art Music canon, and the amazing line up of Harp, Percussion and Electric Guitar, this piece felt like a nice place to investigate these notions. In *grrrrrrrrrr, bby*, Gunnhildur, Matthias and Seth perform their instruments, their bodies and the histories between their bodies and their instruments. They also attempt transgressions from these things: but are these actual transgressions or are they in fact acts of conformity with other histories, other ideals? The piece moves through different situations where expectations and roles become blurry, and situations where the audience has as big a part to play as the musicians onstage.

It is impossible to separate these semi-abstract concepts with the current 'debates' around gender that have recently exploded. I live in Wales and study in England and it is horrifying to see how a vicious and vocal minority have created such a violent and terrifying situation for transgender and non-binary people in Britain. Their disgusting rhetoric is being amplified by both institutional transphobia in the press

and the government, and by the infuriating apathy of so many people. A piece of Western Art Music by a cisgender, male-identifying, white man is of course not going to change anything and I want to do more impactful things in my non-musical life, but it felt imperative to include these attacks, especially in a piece which concerns what I expected to be completely out-dated ideas of gender which are in fact not only still here, but are being upheld by the very people who are supposedly fighting against so-called 'gender ideology'. These people are killing trans people, they are killing queer people. Their pompous and righteous claims about saving children are abhorrent when their words have led to attacks and murders, whether they admit it or not. A while ago it would have seemed ridiculous that queer rights are going backwards, that people would have objections to queer children finding themselves in a tolerant society, but in 2023 a drag queen is immediately seen as a pedophile, a trans woman is immediately seen as an attacker, teaching children about queer topics is seen as an act of grooming, cisgender gay men are stabbed in the street, voguing is a reason for murder, an old woman is beaten to death because someone thought she was transgender, a sixteen-year-old trans girl is stabbed to death and the press deadnames and misgenders her. I am begging anyone who is reading this to stand up for trans people and their rights. This is not a debate. There are not two ideological sides. There are the lives of real people who just want to live and be accepted and there are those who are campaigning against those lives, against those people. An enormous thank you to Gunnhildur, Matthias and Seth, who are just the most absolutely incredible people and collaborators, even in the planning stages I have enjoyed working with them so much. A massive thank you also to Isobel Neary-Adams who allowed me to use an absolutely ridiculous and off-the-wall sentence that they heard and who is just an icon anyway.

Ensemble Adapter



Ensemble Adapter is an experimental music group based in Berlin and Reykjavík. Driven by its founders Matthias Engler (percussion) and Gunnhildur Einarsdóttir (harp), it focuses on collaborative work with partners of various artistic backgrounds worldwide. Treating music as a contemporary art form, Ensemble Adapter creates, curates, produces, workshops and performs - both onstage and online.

<https://ensemble-adapter.de>