



School of Music
University of Missouri

2021-2022 Series | Faculty Recital

DRAX

Megan Arns, percussion

Leo Saguiguit, saxophone

September 3, 2021 | 7:30pm
Sinquefeld Music Center

PROGRAM

- Tantrums (2017)* **Asha Srinivasan**
for saxophone (alto & baritone), percussion, and live electronics (b. 1980)
- They Tried to Bury Us, They Didn't Know We Were Seeds (2015)* **José Martínez**
for saxophone (alto & baritone), marimba, and electronics (b. 1983)
- Where Are Our Mothers; We Don't Have Enough Time (2017)* **Steven Snowden**
for tenor saxophone, percussion, and electronics (b. 1981)
- Soledad (2018)* **Carolina Heredia**
for alto saxophone, percussion, and electronics (b. 1981)

PROGRAM NOTES

DRAX is an ensemble-in-residence at the University of Missouri School of Music comprised of faculty members Leo Saguiguit (saxophone) and Megan Arns (percussion) committed to the growth of the repertoire for this combination. Shortly after its formation, DRAX set out to commission, premiere, and record a set of new works for the duo that also include an electronic/multimedia component, and with a particular emphasis on seeking composers of color and other underrepresented minorities. Composers represented on this program include José Martínez, Asha Srinivasan, Steven Snowden, and Carolina Heredia. It represents a sampling of diverse composers, different instrument combinations, and contrasting aesthetics. Their works touch upon the anger, division, and isolation from the tumultuous last five years of social and political upheaval through their unique voices. A wide range of emotions are expressed by these composers: from rage and acceptance in Srinivasan's Carnatic-influenced work, to confusion and absurdity with Snowden's use of media excerpts, and to solitude and self-reflection in Heredia's music. Martínez examines the reaction to the death of Michael Brown that ignited the Black Lives Matter movement with the use of text from court testimonies.

Asha Srinivasan: *Tantrums*

In the aftermath of the 2016 national election, I noticed an uncanny parallel between the morphology of my emotional response and my toddler's tantrums. Periodic outbursts of wailing subside into simmering whimpers followed by a numb silence as we try to regain composure. Just as we catch our breath, allowing ourselves to be consoled, new thoughts retrigger the raging beast within, until finally, we have lost all energy for shouting and we reluctantly settle down. Perhaps rationality returns and beauty is rediscovered. Here is when a toddler's Buddha mind, ever in the present moment, can be diverted back to play and laughter. But, the adult's monkey mind drags us back into the past; frenzy and panic build again. Ultimately, though, we cannot bear this state of anxiety and we drift into an uneasy acceptance of reality.

— Asha Srinivasan

José Martínez: *They Tried to Bury Us, They Didn't Know We Were Seeds*

As many other Missouri residents in 2014, I heard the news about the death of Michael Brown and the subsequent riots in Ferguson, MO, and I was stunned. Everyone has a different opinion about it. I do not think it is a matter of taking one or the other side of the discussion, but of understanding how both sides are, at the same time, right and wrong. Within this ambiguity is where this piece of music fits.

I am a multi-ethnic Hispanic, for those wondering, born on the Pacific coast of Colombia, where the black community is numerous as well as the inequalities in society and humanitarian problems. As many others there (and also everywhere) I forged myself a thick level of apathy to these problems because it is the only way to subsist. Why would a Latin American born composer care about these events in Ferguson? Because it goes beyond race and nationality and because all lives matter.

The electronic part of the piece is exclusively created with spoken texts that are excerpts from the testimonies of Darren Wilson (police officer) and Dorian Johnson (Michael Brown's companion) to the Grand Jury (public documents since Dec. 2014). These texts are very powerful as they recount the same events from two contradicted perspectives. The readers are people from different nationalities who are members of the Mizzou community. Through the different accents they widen this problem into a bigger international scope. The title of the piece comes from a Mexican proverb that someone put on Michael Brown's shrine that is still standing on Canfield Street.

Steven Snowden: *Where Are Our Mothers; We Don't Have Enough Time*

Where Are Our Mothers and *We Don't Have Enough Time* represent two very different personal reactions to recent social and political strife in the U.S. The first seeks to reconcile feelings of inner turmoil through quiet self-reflection. The second navigates anger, confusion, and absurdity amidst information overload. Though resolution and understanding are sought in both approaches, more questions than answers are raised and truth is further obfuscated rather than illuminated.

— Steven Snowden

Carolina Heredia: *Soledad*

During the initial stages of writing this piece, I was looking for ways to connect with the sound of this particular duo of instruments; something to depart from. I realized saxophone was not a significant part of my life as a musician since, as a violin player, I grew up performing in classical orchestras and folk and tango bands. The saxophone never had a predominant role in these ensembles, if any at all. Thinking about the tango, I suddenly remembered a phenomenal album by Astor Piazzolla, my greatest influence as a teenager, that I hadn't thought of in a while. The album, by Piazzolla (composition and bandoneon) and Gerry Mulligan (baritone saxophone), was recorded in Italy in the 1970s and titled *Summit (Reunión Cumbre)*. The mix of modern tango melodies with a jazz influenced sound and improvisatory sections was my starting point for this work.

The title of this piece, *Soledad*, translates to English as Solitude. This is also the title of a nostalgic work by Piazzolla which has a sequel in the album *Summit* as "Year of Solitude." I found that this second version had a tone of resignation and assimilation. Piazzolla was a person known for his sense of humor and his--sometimes annoying--pranks. Some people couldn't reconcile his personality with his melancholic music and wondered who he really was or what would inspire that music. That is what made me think of our ultimate loneliness, the limits of our physicality, our individual subjectivities, so I decided to make this piece a depiction of our efforts and failures at connecting with our surroundings.

— Carolina Heredia

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

Asha Srinivasan is an Indian-American composer and Associate Professor of Music (Theory/Composition/Electronic Music) at Lawrence University, Appleton, WI. "I have been involved with music since my early childhood in India. My extended family on both of my parents' sides are musical. My mother Lalitha is currently a professional singer of Indian film songs and sings all over the U.S. When I was in India, at age 6, I started taking vocal lessons in Carnatic music (the classical music of Southern India).

"After moving to the U.S., I was introduced to Western classical music through the public school system. In high school, I had the opportunity to take my first Music Theory class. What was supposed to be theoretical part-writing exercises turned into compositional experiments for me and thus sparked my passion for creating

music. I am enthralled by the possibilities of integrating aspects of the Carnatic style into the Western music idiom. Thus, I draw from my Western musical training and my Indian heritage to create my compositional language.

“My works have been released on CD by Ablaze Records, Mark Records, Beauport Classical, and SEAMUS CD Series. My composition Dviraag was recognized as winner of the Flute New Music Consortium competition in 2015 and the Ruam Samai award at the Thailand International Composition Festival in 2011. Other credits include the BMI New Music Commission Competition, Flute/Cello Commissioning Circle call for scores, the Walsum competition, the Prix d’Ete competitions, and ASCAP Plus Awards. I have had compositions performed at ICMC, June in Buffalo, SEAMUS, National Flute Convention, North American Saxophone Alliance, among others.”

José Martinez’s music incorporates a wide range of influences from Colombian folk tunes to contemporary composition techniques, while borrowing from Latin music, heavy metal and audio sampling techniques. His works range from solo pieces with electronics to orchestral works, passing through chamber ensembles, electroacoustic pieces, and collaborations with dancers and video. His main musical interest is the idiosyncratic synthesis of timbral examination, Latin American vernacular music, sociopolitics, and technology. He has written for ensembles such as Alarm Will Sound, Spanish ensemble Taller Sonoro, LA-based chamber group Wild Up, Grammy award-winning quartet Third Coast Percussion, American piano duet Hockett, and the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, among others. His music has been presented at institutes and festivals such as Banff Ensemble Evolution program, SEAMUS 2018, ClarinetFest 2015, and VIPA 2015.

José is a recipient of the 2013 Sinquefield Composition Prize, 2019 Rain Water Grant for Innovation, and of three national composition prizes from Colombia. He is also artistic director of the concert series Stack Overflow that creates opportunities for composers interested in electronics.

An alumnus of the National University of Colombia as both a percussionist and a composer, he pursued an MM in composition at the University of Missouri and earned his DMA in composition from the University of Texas at Austin. He is currently Assistant Professor of Music at Colby College.

The music of **Steven Snowden** has been described as “Beguiling... combining force with clarity” (San Francisco Classical Voice), “A visceral evocation of raw communal memories” (GoldenPlec, Dublin), “Wonderfully dynamic” (Interlude Hong Kong), “Marvelously evocative”, (Cleveland Plain Dealer), and “The most wildly intriguing sight and sound I have experienced at a concert” (The Boston Musical Intelligencer). Writing music for dance, theater, multi-media installations, and the concert stage, his work often focuses on under-ground American history and how past events relate to modern society. While his musical influences are deeply rooted in bluegrass, folk, and rock, he utilizes non-traditional techniques and processes to compose works that don’t squarely align with any single genre or style.

A native of the Ozarks countryside, he began studies in music composition in 2002 and received degrees from Missouri State University (BM), University of Colorado at Boulder (MM), and University of Texas at Austin (DMA). In 2012-2013 he was a Fulbright Scholar in Portugal, researching the implementation of motion tracking technology as a means to facilitate collaboration between music and dance. In 2013-2014, he was a visiting professor and composer in residence at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and is the co-founder/director of the [Fast Forward Austin Music Festival](#). He currently works as a freelance composer in Boston and when he’s not writing music, you can find him deep in the woods foraging for mushrooms with his wife, violist [Lauren Nelson](#).

By exploring the merging of music and visuals, Argentinian composer **Carolina Heredia**'s current research is focused on the production of interactive audiovisual works. A 2015 Fromm Commission recipient, her compositions have been commissioned and performed in the United States and South America by several esteemed musicians and ensembles, including JACK Quartet, Derek Bermel, Alarm Will Sound, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Duo Cortona, Alex Fiterstein, Tesla Quartet, Chiara Quartet, and Khemia Ensemble. Her music has been featured at the SONIC Festival NYC, Aspen Music Festival and School, Bowling Green New Music Festival, the Mizzou International Composers Festival, SEAMUS, Strange Beautiful Music, New Music Gathering, Crested Butte Music Festival, Bowdoin Music Festival, and the TIES Toronto International Electroacoustic Festival, among others. Her work *Virginia* (2015), for solo alto and mixed choir, was awarded the Brehm Prize in choral composition, premiered by the University of Michigan Chamber Choir under the baton of Jerry Blackstone, and is currently published by the Hal Leonard company. *Ius in Bello* (2014), for clarinet and string quartet, will be released this year on a record by Alexander Fiterstein and the Tesla Quartet on Orchid Classics. In 2018 she became the recipient of the inaugural International New Music Competition John Corigliano Grand Prize for her work *Ausencias*. In 2019, she was selected as a winner of the Lake George Music Festival Composition Competition for *Ausencias*.

Carolina Heredia moved to the United States in 2009 at 28 years old to pursue graduate education in music composition. She had received a Licenciature in Music Composition from the National University of Villa Maria (Córdoba, Argentina) and graduated from the Violin program at the Córdoba State Conservatory of Music. Before coming to the States, she had also worked as a violinist, arranger, producer, and composer for the Metropolitan Orchestra of Córdoba and was an active part of the popular music scene, performing violin with and recording for several traditional and progressive tango, folk, and rock bands. In 2017, Carolina completed her Doctorate in Music Composition at the University of Michigan, studying with Michael Daugherty, Evan Chambers, Erik Santos, and Kristin Kuster. She was then a 2017-18 postdoctoral fellow at the University of Missouri School of Music. Currently, she is Assistant Professor in Music Composition and Assistant Director of the Mizzou New Music Initiative at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Heredia's 2015 Harvard University Fromm Music Foundation Commission supported the creation of her work *Ausencias/Ausências/Absences*, for string quartet and fixed media, which was premiered by the JACK Quartet in March 2016. Later that year, she was awarded a one-year fellowship at the University of Michigan Institute for the Humanities to further develop and extend the work into an intermedia collaboration by adding dance and interactive video and extending its length from seventeen to thirty minutes. Heredia collaborated with Costa Rican choreographer Sandra Torijano and Interactive Video Engineer Carlos Garcia, as well as the technical team at the Duderstadt Center, including staging, lighting, and sound. The artistic impetus for this work were the final writings of Violeta Parra, Alfonsina Storni, and Ana C. Cesar, three South American poets who took their own lives. In this work, she explores the concept of suicide as an attempt to exercise a capacity for empathy and compassion as well as to destigmatize mental illness.

Heredia founded Khemia Ensemble in 2015 as a contemporary music ensemble that strives to create innovative audiovisual concert experiences involving interactive technology. The ensemble has presented at several venues across the Americas, including National Sawdust (NYC), Trinosophes (Detroit), Radio Nacional and Facultad de Música (Argentina), and Facultad de Artes (Colombia). Khemia has received support from the Foundation for the Contemporary Arts, the Eastman School of Music Paul R. Judy Center for Innovation and Research, the University of Michigan, and the Mizzou New Music Initiative.

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

DRAX is an ensemble-in-residence at the University of Missouri School of Music with faculty members Leo Saguiguit (saxophones) and Megan Arns (percussion). Formed in 2014, DRAX made its international debut

at the World Saxophone Congress in Strasbourg, France in 2015. Additionally, the duo has performed at the Mizzou International Composers Festival, conferences of the North American Saxophone Alliance at Oklahoma State University, Virginia Tech University, Washington University, the Missouri Percussive Arts Society Day of Percussion, and many other locations. Dedicated to creating new repertoire for this unique combination of instruments, DRAX has recently commissioned and premiered works by composers José Martínez, Carolina Heredia, Aaron Mencher, Steven Snowden, and Asha Srinivasan. DRAX is looking forward to releasing its debut album of commissions for DRAX and electronics in 2021.

Saxophonist **Leo Saguiguit** joined the MU faculty in 2002 after holding previous faculty positions at Northwestern University, University of the South (Sewanee), and Emory University. His degrees are from Emory University and Northwestern, where his major teachers were Stutz Wimmer and Fred Hemke, respectively. Additional teachers include Paul Bro and Jonathan Helton. He has performed throughout the US and abroad, including France, Italy, Sweden, Greece, Cyprus, Brazil, Cuba, China, Taiwan, Thailand, and the Philippines. He has collaborated with many ensembles and currently performs with the Athens (Greece) Saxophone Quartet and Missouri Saxophone Quartet. He has performed regularly with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Milwaukee Symphony, Grant Park Music Festival Orchestra, and Missouri Symphony and appears in over a dozen CD recordings, including six with the professional wind ensemble Philharmonia à Vent and three with the Athens Quartet.

Megan Arns is a percussionist, ethnomusicologist, and educator with a diverse set of skills and a driven passion for her craft. She is a member of the music faculty at the University of Missouri in Columbia, MO as an Assistant Professor of Percussion. Past faculty positions include Mansfield University in Pennsylvania and the National Music Conservatory in Amman, Jordan where she was also the Principal Timpanist of the Amman Symphony Orchestra. Active as a contemporary chamber percussionist, Megan's recent highlights include collaborative performances in France, Spain, India, Jordan, Costa Rica, Ghana, and the United States at venues such as the Kennedy Center, Millennium Park, Smithsonian Institution, and the Percussive Arts Society International Convention. Megan earned a DMA in Percussion & Literature and a MA in Ethnomusicology from the Eastman School of Music. She endorses Vic Firth Sticks & Mallets, Pearl/Adams Musical Instruments, Black Swamp Percussion, Remo Drumheads, and Zildjian Cymbals.