



School of Music
University of Missouri

2021-2022 Series | Guest Ensemble

Alarm Will Sound

January 18, 2022 | 7:00pm
SMC 130

Program

T69 Collapse *^^	Aphex Twin arr. Stefan Freund
Cabeza *^	Lucretia Dalt
Through Thoughts of a Different Kind ^	Igor Santos
Atomic Theory III: Electron Orbitals *^	King Britt and Marcos Balter
Family Galaxy *^^	Tim Exile arr. Oscar Bettison
Omgyjya Switch ^^	Aphex Twin arr. Evan Hause
minipops 67 *^^	Aphex Twin arr. Chris Thompson
Black Origami ^^	Jlin arr. Texu Kim and Chris Thompson

**world premiere

*local premiere

^written for Alarm Will Sound

^^arranged for Alarm Will Sound

Program Notes

T69 Collapse

I was asked by Alan Pierson to create an arrangement of Aphex Twin's *T69 Collapse*, my second arrangement of music by Aphex Twin, following *Cock Ver/10*, which was released on AWS's original *Acoustica* album.

The arrangement begins with a chill tune passed around the winds with tones captured in the piano and strings to create a reverb effect. Muted drums and practice pad play light drum tracks in the background before a bassline emerges. A viola solo, colored by other instruments, introduces a second theme. This calm triadic figure alternates with active glissando gestures led by the strings. A wild breakdown makes up the middle section of the piece, featuring a sustained microtonal pyramid in the brass, wild descents in the upper winds, and violent crescendos in the percussion. The final section, which returns to a more relaxed character, includes a continuous funky bassline line and repeated keyboard progression. Short ostinato figures repeat in the other instruments, creating textures that come and go before freezing at the end.

In addition to using several extended techniques that imitate the electronic sounds of the original, the arrangement calls upon members of the ensemble to sing, play auxiliary percussion instruments, and clap besides playing their own instruments.

–Stefan Freund

Cabeza

Cabeza is the result of close collaboration between Lucrecia Dalt and Alarm Will Sound. Lucrecia is especially grateful to Tim Leopold, Matt Smallcomb, Christa Robinson, Michael Harley, Elisabeth Stimpert, and John Orfe.

Through Thoughts of a Different Kind

“...what does it mean when some tune follows you occurs to you [...] in the middle of thoughts of a quite different kind?”

–Theodor Reik (1960)

Atomic Theory III: “Electron Orbitals”

The process of creating this collaborative work between AWS, electronic composer King Britt, and Brazilian composer Marcos Balter is as much part of the performance as the performance itself.

The original meeting of minds happened at a first workshop in NYC. Marcos planted the seed with small phrases for AWS to play, digitally dissected by King Britt, then used as source material for King's orchestration. His approach to building around Marcos' now-fragmented ideas was one of reconstruction and stardust. What would it sound like to float in stardust, adding more electronics and ideas to each section for Marcos to then add a last layer of magic?

The second workshop took place in Wisconsin and revealed the end result. Marcos's orchestration was the glue to hold it all together on the journey, enhancing and pushing the elements further into the cosmos.

Conductor Alan Pierson suggested King 'electronically treat' the entire orchestra from the control board.

So, what you are hearing is a multi-layered process of acoustic, electronic, stardust and magic, blurring the lines

between what is real and what is fantasy.

Omgjya Switch 7

Omgjya Switch 7 is incredibly dense, fast, and percussive. It was one of the last tracks on Alarm Will Sound's *Acoustica* project to be arranged, and I welcomed the challenge. At first, I thought it would have been better suited to a large percussion ensemble than a chamber orchestra. Indeed, my final version uses has three very busy percussionists, with other members of the ensemble playing percussion in addition to their own instruments. The wind and string instruments are often utilized in a percussive way as well.

My first approach to the track was to transform it into an original, 21st-century contemporary chamber orchestra piece. Alan Pierson opened the floodgates by pushing me to do more, encouraging me to write what I *really* heard as specifically as possible and not to be concerned with how the sound would be made, or with the technical challenges of making it.

The rehearsal phase was luxurious. I worked with the ensemble for a week, refining ideas day and night. The fruits of one day's experimentation would be turned into notated music the next morning. We exhausted every resource. I even wheeled a shopping cart down from an art classroom to demonstrate a percussive effect that eventually ended up unused. But other ideas I would never have thought of turned out to be ideal: we found a duck call and an engraving tool lying around which ended up being the best choices for the final raucous passage.

–Evan Hause

minipops 67 [120.2][source field mix]

Over three decades and hundreds of releases, the music of Richard D. James (a.k.a. Aphex Twin) has always raised perplexing questions, and *minipops 67 [120.2][source field mix]* is no exception. The track opens his 2014 album, *Syro*, Aphex Twin's first official release in over 10 years. It is known to be named after a piece of musical equipment that James used for the album: the Korg minipops drum machine. And the track raises the kinds of unanswered questions that make being an Aphex Twin fan such fun: what is that devilish voice saying and what processing was used to mask it? What gear and techniques did James employ to get such a luxuriously human feel and sound out of electronic machines? Fans obsess over these questions in countless internet chat boards. And the graphics of studio expenses and instruments that James includes in the album art offer almost no clear information, just adding to the fascinating ambiguity.

The imaginative challenges of arranging this music for acoustic instruments was a formative experience in the development of Alarm Will Sound as a band. Now it plays a big part in the inspiration for the Alarm System project, which utilizes those experiences as a toolbox for collaboration with new music creators working outside of new music's traditional methods. Not having been with the group at the time of the original Aphex Twin project, I was delighted to contribute this arrangement at a moment when James is suddenly releasing so much new music into the world once again.

–Chris Thompson

Acknowledgements

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Biographies

Alarm Will Sound

Alarm Will Sound is a 20-member band committed to innovative performances and recordings of today's music. They have established a reputation for performing demanding music with energetic skill. Their performances have been described as "equal parts exuberance, nonchalance, and virtuosity" by the *Financial Times of London* and as "a triumph of ensemble playing" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The *New York Times* says that Alarm Will Sound is "one of the most vital and original ensembles on the American music scene."

With classical skill and unlimited curiosity, Alarm Will Sound takes on music from a wide variety of styles. Its repertoire ranges from European to American works, from the arch-modernist to the pop-influenced. Alarm Will Sound has been associated since its inception with composers at the forefront of contemporary music, premiering pieces by John Adams, Steve Reich, David Lang, Michael Gordon, Aaron Jay Kernis, Augusta Read Thomas, Derek Bermel, Benedict Mason, and Wolfgang Rihm, among others. The group itself includes many composer-performers, which allows for an unusual degree of insight into the creation and performance of new work.

Alarm Will Sound is the resident ensemble at the Mizzou International Composers Festival. Held each July at the University of Missouri in Columbia, the festival features eight world premieres by early-career composers. During the weeklong festival, these composers work closely with Alarm Will Sound and two established guest composers to perform and record their new work.

Alarm Will Sound may be heard on fifteen recordings, including including *For George Lewis* | *Autoshchediasms*, their most recent release featuring music of Tyshawn Sorey; *Omnisphere*, with jazz trio *Medeski Martin & Wood*; a collaboration with Peabody Award-winning podcast *Meet the Composer* titled *Splitting Adams*; and the premiere recording of Steve Reich's *Radio Rewrite*. Their genre-bending, critically acclaimed *Acoustica* features live-performance arrangements of music by electronica guru Aphex Twin. This unique project taps the diverse talents within the group, from the many composers who made arrangements of the original tracks, to the experimental approaches developed by the performers.

In 2016, Alarm Will Sound in a co-production with Opera Theatre of St. Louis, presented the world premiere of the staged version of Donnacha Dennehy's *The Hunger* at the BAM Next Wave Festival and the Touhill Performing Arts Center. Featuring Iarla O'Lionárd (traditional Irish singer) and Katherine Manley (soprano) with direction by Tom Creed, *The Hunger* is punctuated by video commentary and profound early recordings of traditional Irish folk ballads mined from various archives including those of Alan Lomax.

In 2013-14, Alarm Will Sound served as artists-in-residence at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. During that season, the ensemble presented four large ensemble performances at the Met, including two site-specific

productions staged in museum galleries (*Twinned*, a collaboration with Dance Heginbotham and *I Was Here I Was I*, a new theatrical work by Kate Soper and Nigel Maister), as well as several smaller events in collaboration with the Museum's educational programs.

In 2011, at Carnegie Hall, the group presented *1969*, a multimedia event that uses music, images, text, and staging to tell the compelling story of great musicians—John Lennon, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Paul McCartney, Luciano Berio, Yoko Ono, and Leonard Bernstein—striving for a new music and a new world amidst the turmoil of the late 1960s. *1969*'s unconventional approach combining music, history, and ideas has been critically praised by the *New York Times* (“...a swirling, heady meditation on the intersection of experimental and commercial spheres, and of social and aesthetic agendas.”)

Alarm Will Sound has been presented by Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, (le) Poisson Rouge, Miller Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Kitchen, the Bang on a Can Marathon, Disney Hall, Kimmel Center, Library of Congress, the Walker Arts Center, Cal Performances, Stanford Lively Arts, Duke Performances, and the Warhol Museum. International tours include the Holland Festival, Sacrum Profanum, Moscow's Art November, St. Petersburg's Pro Arte Festival, and the Barbican.

The members of the ensemble have also demonstrated our commitment to the education of young performers and composers through residency performances and activities at the Community Music School of Webster University, Cleveland State University, University of Colorado at Boulder, University of Missouri, Eastman School of Music, Dickinson College, Duke University, the Manhattan School of Music, Harvard University, New York University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

For more information and to join the mailing list, visit Alarm Will Sound's website at www.alarmwillsound.com

Alan Pierson

Alan Pierson has been praised as “a dynamic conductor and musical visionary” by the *New York Times*, “a young conductor of monstrous skill” by *Newsday*, “gifted and electrifying” by the *Boston Globe*, and “one of the most exciting figures in new music today” by *Fanfare*. In addition to his work as artistic director of Alarm Will Sound, he is Principal Conductor of the Dublin-based Crash Ensemble, has served as Artistic Director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and has guest conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, the London Sinfonietta, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Steve Reich Ensemble, Carnegie Hall's Ensemble ACJW, the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, the New World Symphony, and the Silk Road Project, among other ensembles. He is Principal Conductor of the Dublin-based Crash Ensemble, co-director of the Northwestern University Contemporary Music Ensemble, and has been a visiting faculty conductor at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, the Eastman School of Music, and at the Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity. Mr. Pierson has collaborated with major composers and performers, including Yo Yo Ma, Steve Reich, Dawn Upshaw, Osvaldo Golijov, John Adams, Augusta Read Thomas, David Lang, Michael Gordon, La Monte Young, and choreographers Christopher Wheeldon, Akram Khan and Elliot Feld. Mr. Pierson received bachelor's degrees in physics and music from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a doctorate in conducting from the Eastman School of Music. He has recorded for Nonesuch Records, Cantaloupe Music, Sony Classical, and Sweetspot DVD.

Personnel

Erin Lesser, flute
Christa Robinson, oboe
Bill Kalinkos, clarinet and saxophone
Elisabeth Stimpert, clarinets
Adrian Morejon, bassoon
Cara Kizer, horn
Tim Leopold, trumpet
Michael Clayville, trombone
Chris Thompson, percussion
Matt Smallcomb, percussion
Megan Arns, percussion
John Orfe, piano
Courtney Orlando, violin
Patti Kilroy, violin
Matt Albert, viola
Eli Lara, cello
Christian Dillingham, bass
Ryan Ferreira, electric guitar
David Myers, Audio Engineer
Alan Pierson, conductor and Artistic Director

Gavin Chuck, Executive Director
Annie Toth, General Manager
Peter Ferry, Assistant Director of Artistic Planning
Jason Varvaro, Production Manager
Chihiro Shibayama, Librarian