



Program

Brittany Green, *gLitchED dreams//invisible BEINGS**

Brittany Green, narrator

Kate Alexandrite, video

Ana E. López-Reyes, *NÉBULA**

Óldo Erréve, visual installation

Oscar Bettison, *Livre des Sauvages*

*written for Alarm Will Sound

Notes

Brittany Green, *gLitchED dreams//invisible BEINGS*

gLitchED dreams//invisible BEINGS is a modular, sonic collage of Afrofuturism, Afrobeat, Minimalism, and Experimentalism that follows the journey of Eye, an Android that finds themselves trying to break out of a world in which they cannot exist as their authentic self. Through this journey of self actualization, Eye struggles to untangle where the world ends and they begin, grappling with the blurred lines of choice, coercion, and control within invisible power structures. Inspired by Legacy Russell's *Glitch*, this work explores the ways technology, our intersecting identities, and the unseen structures around us inform and mediate one another, asking "how can I choose agency within a controlled construct?" The performers of the piece engage with the material through the perspective of Eye. With the order of musical material determined by a computer, performers must choose to perform as they are instructed, perform their own material in defiance, or refuse to engage with the piece all together. The piece features text written by Brittany, alongside quotations from Essex Hemphill and Kara Keeling, and ChatGPT generated code and includes live video processing by Kate Alexandrite. *gLitchED dreams//invisible BEINGS* was commissioned by Alarm Will Sound through the Matt Marks Impact Fund.

Ana E. López-Reyes, *NÉBULA*

Nébula is a multimedia exploration of the relationship between science and myth, building a narrative that juxtaposes ancient creation stories with our scientific understanding of planet and star formation. Through this interplay, the piece reflects on cycles of transformation—creation, destruction, and reconstruction—that shape the cosmos and our own existence.

Many cultures tell of a deity whose body is dismembered to give rise to the world. These myths resonate across continents and traditions, speaking to a deep, shared understanding of the regenerative nature of matter.

In Aztec mythology, the primordial creature Tlaltecuhltli is dismembered to create the world: her skin becomes grass and herbs, her hair the trees and flowers, her eyes the springs, and her mouth the rivers and caves. Similarly, in Mesopotamian mythology, the goddess Tiamat is split in two by Marduk, who creates heaven and earth from her body, the Tigris and Euphrates from her eyes, and mountains from her breasts. In Chinese mythology, Pangu, the primordial giant, dies, and his body transforms into the elements of the universe: his breath becomes the wind, his eyes the sun and moon, his body the mountains, and his blood the rivers.

Science, too, tells us a story of cosmic regeneration. Stars are born from the dust and gas of long-dead stars, condensed by gravity and ignited by nuclear fusion. When stars form, solar winds scatter the leftover material, which eventually turns into planets. Everything on Earth—from the iron in our blood to the oxygen we breathe—originated in the heart of a star.

These myths and scientific truths echo each other in profound ways. Both speak of a shared origin, of transformation and interconnectedness: the dust of a star becomes a world, just as the body of the goddess becomes the earth. In their poetic wisdom, these myths remind us that we are part of an endless cycle, where everything comes from—and returns to—the same source.

Nébula intends to invite the audience to reconnect to the feeling of awe of the world we inhabit, trying to see our universe with wonder, remembering our spiritual connections to it, and encouraging us to revive our sometimes forgotten feeling of deep amazement at our own existence.

Oscar Bettison, *Livre des Sauvages*

A hidden narrative has always been important to me in writing my music, and in working in larger scale formats this has, if anything, become more important. Narrative structures and narrative devices inform my musical thinking, but recently I have become interested in

graphic-novels, as an analogous parallel to my large-scale preoccupations. So, it was with great delight when, some time after starting this piece, I discovered the *Livre des Sauvages*. This book of pictographs (in effect a proto-graphic novel, albeit a pretty bizarre one) was written sometime in the late 18th/early 19th century somewhere in the US and it resurfaced in France where an abbot (who had worked as a missionary in the US and Mexico) proclaimed it to be a genuine work of native peoples (the “sauvages” (savages) of the title in early 19th thinking about non-Europeans.) Unfortunately, for our abbot, there were a couple of problems with this hypothesis, the most notable being that certain words (when text does indeed appear) were in German. So, a later theory was that this book was written by a naughty German adolescent (no doubt a male given the obsession with depicting the kind of anatomical elements that have been drawn by schoolboys on walls, desks and textbooks for millennia.) Whatever the provenance of the *Livre des Sauvages*, it certainly is a fascinating document; crudely yet captivatingly drawn depictions of everyday life, religious ceremonies, wars with invading forces and more “earthy” elements, vie with strange cryptograms for space on the page. It seems to be trying to tell us a story, but what that story is is really anybody’s guess. Of course, given my preoccupation for narrative and interest and the intersection of cultures, I immediately took the book to heart and realised that it provided a suitable visual counterpoint to my ideas for this piece. I decided to take three pictographs (from a couple of hundred that comprise the book), describe them, and take these as titles for each of the movements as well as taking the title of the book as the title for my piece.

My *Livre des Sauvages* is in three movements: fast-slow-fast and lasts about thirty minutes. I think of it as a kind of chamber concerto or sinfonia concertante. The ensemble is divided into two with percussion in the middle, and each group, for the most part, is lead by a violin. A lot of the time the violins have the most to do, but I think of them as leaders rather than soloists. Indeed most of the ensemble at one point or another have prominent roles. Certainly, by the end of the piece, the whole group functions as a whole. The movements are as follows:

1) “Curious fauna, some of it murderous”

Using pictures and symbols the unreliable narrative comes in fits and starts often getting stuck, backtracking or lurching forward. When things do seem to come into focus, they are highly implausible.

2) “Alchemy or a new religion”

A new set of images seems to show something which should be easy to describe, the religious practices of a new people. However, whilst the picture is clear, the interpretation is not. Is this a religious ceremony or some sort of arcane scientific endeavour?

3) “Treasure ships and heretical ceremonies”

Starting again, and from a different perspective, it seems clear that visitors have arrived on a foreign shore. They have brought with them things of wonder to trade, and the native people have adopted some of their religious practices -without, of course, recognising the value or purpose of either.

— Oscar Bettison

“Commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association

Gustavo Dudamel, Music Director;

MusikFabrik and Kunststiftung NRW”

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Brittany Green's *gLitchED dreams//invisible BEINGS* and Ana E. López-Reyes' *NÉBULA* were commissioned and developed through Alarm Will Sound's Matt Marks Impact Fund, a fund to create exciting, ambitious projects that have potential to make significant cultural and social impact through stylistic and demographic diversity of our work. Additional support provided by the Cheswaty Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Bios



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 Steve Reich, Meredith Monk, Tyshawn Sorey, David Lang, John Adams, Mary Kouyoumdjian, John Luther Adams, Marcos Balter, and Augusta Read Thomas 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 collaborates with artists who work beyond the bounds of classical music. *Alarm System*, and the Matt Marks Impact Fund are initiatives that have created cross-genre music with electronica artists Eartheater, Jlin, King Britt, and Rashad Becker; jazz composer-performer Dave Douglas; multimedia artists Mira Calix, Bakudi Scream, and Damon Davis; soundtrack composers Brian Reitzell and JG Thirlwell; producer Valgeir Sigurðsson, and singer-songwriter Alyssa Pyper.

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 nineteen recordings, including *Land of Winter*, their most recent release featuring music of Donnacha Dennehy; *Omnisphere*, with jazz trio *Medeski Martin & Wood*; *For George Lewis | Autoschediasms*, one of *The New Yorker's* Notable Recordings of 2021 ; 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.

Recent performances reflect Alarm Will Sound's boundary-pushing ethos. In October 2022, they presented an overnight performance of John Luther Adams' *Ten Thousand Birds* at the Paris Philharmonie during Nuit Blanche, playing four cycles between 9 PM and 4 AM for thousands of audience members. In September 2024, they premiered David T. Little's *What Belongs to You* at the Modlin Center for the Performing Arts, based on Garth Greenwell's novel, featuring GRAMMY-winning tenor Karim Sulayman and directed by Mark Morris. In 2023, Alarm Will Sound performed Mary Kouyoumdjian's Pulitzer-finalist *Paper Pianos* at EMPAC, a multimedia exploration of refugee experiences they co-commissioned. Additionally, their 2024 *Sun Dogs* tour, created in collaboration with composers Arooj Aftab, Daniel Wohl, Devonté Hynes, and Rafiq Bhatia, and done in partnership with Liquid Music, highlighted groundbreaking collaborations blending music and film across four U.S. cities.

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, Miller Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Bang on a Can's Long Play Festival, Disney Hall, Kimmel Center, Library of Congress, Annenberg Center, the Clarice, CAP UCLA, Caramoor, and the Warhol Museum. International tours include the Beijing Modern Festival, 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 Princeton University, the University of Michigan, University of Maryland, Shenandoah University, 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.



Alan Pierson

Alan Pierson has been praised as “a dynamic conductor and musical visionary” by The New York Times, a “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 has served as Artistic Director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and guest conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, L.A. Opera, Nationaltheater Mannheim, the London Sinfonietta, the Steve Reich Ensemble, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, the New World Symphony, and the Silk Road Project, among others. He is 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.

Passionate about using storytelling to bring listeners inside of contemporary music, he has led the creation of innovative musical experiences, like Alarm Will Sound’s 1969 and Soundbites video series, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic’s Brooklyn Village project. Mr. Pierson has collaborated with major composers and performers, including Yo Yo Ma, Steve Reich, Dawn Upshaw, Osvaldo Golijov, John Adams, John Luther Adams, Augusta Read Thomas, David Lang, Michael Gordon, La Monte Young, and choreographers Mark Morris, Christopher Wheeldon, Akram Khan, and Elliot Feld. Mr. Pierson received bachelor 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, Oehms Classics, and Sweetspot DVD.

ALARM WILL SOUND

Erin Lesser, flutes

Christa Robinson, oboes

Bill Kalinkos, clarinets and saxophones

Elisabeth Stimpert, clarinets
Leo Saguiguit, saxophone
Michael Harley, bassoon
Laura Weiner, horn
Tim Leopold, trumpet
Michael Clayville, trombone
Chris P. Thompson, percussion
Matt Smallcomb, percussion
John Orfe, piano and celesta
Courtney Orlando, violin
Patti Kilroy, violin
Luis Eduardo Bellorín, viola
Stefan Freund, cello
Miles Brown, bass and electric bass
James Moore, electric guitar
Cory Brodack, Audio Engineer
Alan Pierson, conductor and Artistic Director

Gavin Chuck, Executive Director
Peter Ferry, Assistant Director of Artistic Planning
Jason Varvaro, Production Manager
Annie Toth, General Manager
Tracy Mendez, Development Manager
Michael Clayville, Director of Marketing
Bill Kalinkos, Librarian
Uday Singh, Program Coordinator



Authored by Michael Clayville

Trombone