EMPAC
MUSIC / SOUND
AKOUSMA @ EMPAC
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8:00 PM

AKOUSMA @ EMPAC

Louis Dufort	*Étude no.1 for the EMPAC Lobby*
Gilles Gobeil	*Des temps oubliés*
Seth Nehil	*Collide*
Adam Basanta	*instant gris*
	is not a / a / is not
Olivia Block	*Dissolution*
Louis Dufort	*Étude no.2 for the EMPAC Lobby*

Étude no.1 & no.2 for the EMPAC Lobby

These two studies serve as an opener and closer for this special concert. As you have already noticed, you are seated not in one of the studios or the concert hall but in the main lobby. "Why?" you may ask. Because sound travels through air molecules, and the more room the sound has, the more it can travel and surround you, making you intrinsically part of the soundscape. This kind of technical setup, also called an acousmonium, gives the opportunity to the composer to simulate and magnify movement that is immanent to sound matter. These two studies try to expand the notion of sound as an organic complex structure and are interacting with each other in an attempt to reach a state of autopoiesis in which the listener takes part..

On behalf of the invited composers and the AKOUSMA festival, I wish to sincerely thank the EMPAC team for receiving us in such great conditions. I also wish to personally thank the curator, Argeo Ascani, for proposing this crazy idea of using the magnificent EMPAC lobby as our main instrument!

Des temps oubliés (2012)
Commissioned GRM with support from the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA).

In 2011, the 200th anniversary of Franz Liszt was celebrated. Des temps oubliés is a modest homage to the Hungarian composer and pianist. Musical fragments appear and are rapidly absorbed into this new soundscape of the technological revolution. With thanks to Robin Minard and François Couture.

Des temps oubliés was finalist at the 2014 Klang! Electroacoustic Composition Competition, Montpellier, France.

Collide

Collide is a new set, composed specifically for the Akousma Festival. These pieces celebrate the endless mutability of sound as material: acoustic recordings are played back on broken speakers, swung through the air to create Doppler shifts, combined into dense strata, fed into a sampler, corrupted through distortion, colored with convolution reverb, hyper-edited and digitally manipulated. Waveforms are sliced, duplicated, and warped in a process of raw granular synthesis—constructing tones, pulses, and pitches from previously rhythmic sources (and vice versa). In performance, individual sonic events, phrases, and streams are triggered, looped, and layered in a highly-structured improvisation.

Collide has been inspired by minimal electronic music, classic works of musique concréte, film sound design and current hip-hop production. Collide continues some of the preoccupations of my previous work, Bounds (composed for listening in total darkness), while moving ever-so-slightly closer to the repetition, pulse and shifting layers of electronic dance music. In Collide, sound events aggregate, orbit, implode, and get pulled apart—constantly separating, recombining, and dispersing.

instant gris
5:30, stereo, 2014.

A series of three related miniatures, instant gris relies on a small palette of impoverished sound materials—glitches, microphone handling noise, digital errors, and basic waveforms—largely sonic refuse from previous works and ongoing experiments. Minimal and flat, these materials regain dimensionality solely by insisting on their own repetition. Each miniature is envisioned as a reprieve: a grey moment of non-development, void of dramatic arcs.

is not a / a / is not
9:31, stereo, 2010 (revised 2014).

"a glass is a glass is a glass" – adapted from Gertrude Stein
"Ceci n'est pas une verre" – adapted from René Magritte

A revised counterpart to my work a glass is not a glass (2010), is not a / a / is not is similarly composed using wine glasses as its sole sound source. This common

sound source encapsulates both its banal everyday use, as well as the inherent musicality of everyday objects. Continuing where its counterpart work left off, is not a / a / is not extends the exploration of this simple object into various spatial and textural settings. Still, the untreated sound functions as both departure and arrival points, allowing elastic musical elaborations between each concréte book-end.

Dissolution

Dissolution is a solo performance piece composed mainly of pre-recorded, unscripted conversations. These recorded dialogues are layered, obscured, and revealed through various live processing techniques. At most points in the piece, there are no decipherable words, only somewhat recognizable linguistic and emotional sound patterns and inflections. There are small, fleeting glimpses of language, only to be submerged into a haze of patterns again. Field recordings from various sites, live feeds, and short-wave radio sounds are also brought in and out of the mix. Dissolution is both a sound/musical performance and a personal meditation about the failings and complications of sound-communication—the misunderstandings and mistranslations, interference and disruptions.

AKOUSMA is produced by Réseaux, a composer-run organization founded in 1991 to commission, promote, and support electroacoustic music. Montréal is the North American hub for electronic music, offering a wide range of festivals spanning dance music, acoustics research, and everything in between.

Seth Nehil makes sound for listening, performance, and installation. Over the last 15 years he has crafted a unique and unusual sonic world, mixing acoustic and electronic sources, field recordings, granular synthesis, and voice. He has released over 15 albums and has collaborated with dance companies, performers, and video artists.

Olivia Block creates original sound compositions for concerts, site-specific multi-speaker installations, live cinema, and performance. Her compositions often include field recordings, chamber instruments, and electronic textures. Block creates scores for large ensemble, string quartet, and orchestra. Her solo performances include partially improvised pieces for inside piano, electronics, and amplified objects, presented in a slow and deliberate gestural style that Steve Smith of the New York Times described recently as having “palpable sensations of volition and emotional involvement.” She also creates multimedia works for sounds and video.

Block has performed, premiered, and exhibited her work throughout Europe, America, and Japan in festivals including Sonic Light (Amsterdam), Kontraste (Krems), Dissonanze (Rome), Archipel (Geneva), Angelica (Bologna), Sunoni per il Popolo (Montreal), and many others. Additionally, she has presented work at the ICA (London), MCA (Chicago), La Biennale di Venezia 52nd International Festival of Contemporary Music, The Kitchen (NYC), ISSUE Project Room, and Experimental Intermedia (Brooklyn). She has completed residencies and premiered works at Mills College of Music, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Berklee College of Music. Block has presented talks at additional universities in film, music, and media arts departments, including Yale University and Indiana University. She has created sound installations for public sites and exhibition spaces including the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the library at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, the Lincoln Conservatory Fern Room in Chicago, and at the “Echoes Through the Mountains” exhibit at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy.

Her latest LP/download release, Karren (Sedimental, 2013), recorded with the Chicago Composers Orchestra, was chosen “Best of 2014” by The Wire, Pitchfork, and Artforum, among other publications.

Adam Basanta is an award-winning composer and media artist whose work traverses electroacoustic and instrumental composition, audiovisual installations,

site-specific interventions, laptop performance, and dynamic light design. His work explores notions of listening and audiovisual perception, the re-animation of quotidian objects, and the articulation of site and space.

His concert works have been presented worldwide and awarded multiple national and international prizes, including Métamorphoses 2010 (Belgium) and the John Weinzweig grand prize in the SOCAN Foundation Awards for Young Composers (Canada). His sound and audiovisual installations, both solo and collaborative, have been presented across North America and Europe, and awarded in the Prix Ars Electronica 2013 (honorable mention, Hybrid Art category) and the 2014 Edith-Russ-Haus Awards for Emerging Media Artists.

Adam holds a BFA in composition from Simon Fraser University (Vancouver, BC) and an interdisciplinary MA in composition and sound art installation at Concordia University (Montréal, QC). He lives and works in Montréal.

Gilles Gobeil has been focusing his work on acousmatic and mixed music since 1985. His works fall close to what is called "cinema for the ear." Many of his pieces have been inspired by literary works and attempt to let us see through sound.

Gobeil has won over 20 national and international awards at Ars Electronica (Austria), Bourges (France), Stockholm Electronic Arts Award (Sweden), CIMESP (Brazil), Métamorphoses (Belgium), Ciber@rt (Spain), and Luigi Russolo (Italy) competitions, among others. His DVD-audio Trilogie d'ondes won the Conseil québécois de la musique (CQM)'s Prix Opus for Best Album in 2004-05; his CD Le contrat was nominated in the same category in 2003-04.

He has received commissions from Codes d'Accès (Montréal), empreintes DIGITALes (Montréal), Groupe de musique expérimentale de Bourges (GMEB, France), Musiques & Recherches (Belgium), Réseaux des arts médiatiques (Montréal), Société Radio-Canada, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM, Germany), and from performers Suzanne Binet-Audet, René Lussier, and Arturo Parra. He has been composer-in-residence in Banff (Canada, 1993, '95), Bourges (France, 1991), at the GRM (France, 1993) and ZKM (Germany, 2005, '06, '07), and guest composer at DAAD(Germany, 2008).

Gobeil is a professor of music technology at Collège de Drummondville since 1992. He has been a guest lecturer in electroacoustic composition at Université de Montréal (2005-06) and the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal (2007). He is a member of the Canadian Electroacoustic Community (CEC), associate composer of the Canadian Music Centre (CMC), and co-founder of Réseaux, an organization devoted to producing media arts events. He has a master's degree in composition from the Université de Montréal.

The music of Montréal composer **Louis Dufort** ranges from a cathartic form of expressionism mostly found in his early works to organicism focusing on the inner structure of sound matter in his latest works.

Although he first developed his style through electroacoustic music, he quickly delved into mixed music and multimedia music, which drew attention from a number of extremely diverse Montréal-based organizations.

Dufort's international profile has been increasing since the early 2000s. In 2001, he received a mention from Prix Ars Electronica (Austria). In 2005, he collaborated with the German Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM) and two years later, the Recombinant Media Labs (RML) in San Francisco. His recent AV works were presented at Berlin's Transmediale festival in 2011, Mutek festival in 2012, Elektra festival in 2013, and a new piece with live electronics for ECM+ in 2014. He is also well known for his collaboration with internationally renowned choreographer Marie Chouinard since 1999. Dufort teaches at the CMM and is the artistic director of AKOUSMA festival in Montréal.

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