



*The Newsletter of the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States,
providing news, interviews, and announcements.*

Published a Single Omnibus Edition During Pandemic

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By Sofy Yuditskaya

Rodney DuPlessis, Nicolas Chuaqui, Kelley Sheehan, and David Q. Nguyen were finalists for the ASCAP/SEAMUS Student Composer Commissioning Program, and Rachel Gibson was the Allen Strange Award winner. As the SEAMUS Conference moved online this year due to COVID-19, we checked in with the composers on their work.

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ASCAP

FROM THE EDITOR



Dear SEAMUS community,

It's my honor to have this great opportunity to serve you as the editor-in-chief of our SEAMUS newsletter. As we are all in this pandemic and have been through an extremely challenging year together, our editorial board has decided to combine the 2020 newsletter issues to a single 2020 Omnibus edition. However, our goals remains the same. We aim to create a series of meaningful and agile newsletters that reflect members' activities, accomplishments, ideas, and passions, which includes the full spectrum of our musical activities at SEAMUS.

As an optimist, I believe that 2021 will be a good year and hope you feel the same! Please feel free to reach out to me and make your voice heard. I look forward to working with you more and connecting with all of you via our newsletter and beyond in 2021!

Happy New Year!



Jiayue Cecilia Wu

SEAMUS Newsletter

SEAMUS 2021

The Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States (SEAMUS) 2021 National Conference will be held virtually on April 23-25, 2021. SEAMUS 2021 will present an exceptional program of works showcasing a broad spectrum of electro-acoustic modes and practices. The SEAMUS 2021 National Conference will feature virtual concerts in collaboration with partner institutions, as described below. In addition, we will present a selection of paper presentations, panels, installations, demonstrations, and workshops. The submission portal will close 11:59 PM PST, January 10th, 2021.





LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear SEAMUS Members,

A great deal has happened since the last time I wrote in this space, but I'll keep it short and sweet. Our colleagues on the board are focused primarily on producing an inspiring SEAMUS 2021 National Conference. I hope you'll join me in offering profound thanks to Brooks Frederickson and David Gedosh for their service on the ad

hoc 2021 Conference Committee, serving with Annie Hui-Hsin Hsieh, Steven Kemper, and myself. We received more than 50 excellent proposals for S21 program elements, and have been working to shape the conference with genuine excitement.

Thanks also to Cecilia Wu for the wealth of news below in this 2020 Omnibus Edition of the SEAMUS Newsletter. Sofy Yuditskaya's interviews with 2020's ASCAP/SEAMUS Award nominees and Allen Strange Award winner, and many reports of our members' diverse activities make for a lively holiday read. Onward!

Best and safest wishes,

Ted

Ted Coffey, President
SEAMUS

president@seamusonline.org



GETTING TO KNOW THE SEAMUS/ ASCAP 2020 AWARD WINNERS & THEIR WORK

By Sofy Yuditskaya

Rodney DuPlessis, Nicolas Chuaqui, Kelley Sheehan, and David Q. Nguyen were finalists for the ASCAP/SEAMUS Student Composer Commissioning Program, and Rachel Gibson was the Allen Strange Award winner. As the SEAMUS Conference moved online this year due to COVID-19, we checked in with the composers on their work.

Kelley Sheehan

Kelley Sheehan is a composer and computer musician moving between acoustic, electronic, electro-acoustic, and performance art works. In any medium, her work centers on noise, performance, and interaction. Her work has been described as "Full of discovery, collaboration, and unpredictability" (Gaudeamus Foundation) with "Woozy Electronics" (LA Weekly). Recently named the prize winner of the Gaudeamus Award 2019 and awarded first place for the ASCAP/SEAMUS commissioning competition, she has also been awarded residencies and fellowships to Bang on a Can Festival, the 2019 National Composers Intensive with LA Philharmonic and the International Contemporary Ensemble, among others. Her work has been presented at conferences such as New Music Gathering and series such as Omaha Under that Radar's Generator Series.

When not composing, she is performing as a founding member of The Plucky Plunkers, an improvisational duo focused on commission works for the toy piano and multimedia collaborations and as a member of the composer collective Ultravioleta. Her work and research has led her to study composition with composers of various interests and backgrounds such as Sivan Cohen Elias, Marcos Balter, and Fredrick Gifford. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Composition at Harvard University studying with Chaya Czernowin and Hans Tutschku.

Sofy: Tell me something about your work process as you made this piece?

Kelley: This piece comes from my experience improvising, I improvise usually in feedback and no-

input electronics, like a no-input mixer, and I thought it would be a good idea to see what happens when I try and use this no-input mixer with acoustic instruments in a concert setting like I did in "Talk Circus" so that was sort of the beginning of the idea and then from there it was a matter of checking things out, doing some experimentation with no-input mixer and percussion in my studio, and then, the piece just sort of grew from that.

Sofy: Tell me a little about how it grew, maybe describing one of its turning points or evolutions or something that happened along the way?

Kelley: When I first got on this piece, I knew I wanted to use percussion and a no-input mixer and see how they could collaborate together and talk to one another. One of the ways that it grew was when I figured out ways to add contact mics to the percussion instruments so that I could get the sound of the percussion into the no-input mixer and sort of play with that dialog. That was a big turning point, other things were figuring out the structure and the form of the piece as I wrote. I should mention that working with no-input mixing and feedback can be really unpredictable, so I had to write a lot of these things knowing I had to find ways to make it as predictable as possible and a lot of that was finding gestures that I felt comfortable about. So, the form comes from this clicking drone that you can sort of get to easily by manipulating the no-input mixer. I knew to save that for a long section I had planned for the piece and so that's sort of how it grew, putting these puzzle pieces together to make the piece happen.

Sofy: It seems like it has a lot of formalism in it, but also all this radical sound. Can you share with me some of your metaphorical thoughts that are in the piece?

Kelley: Yeah sure, I sort of had this idea that all three of the improvisors in the piece would become this meta-instrument because what the percussion does and the effect that the no-input mixer makes. And then the no-input mixer musician is doing one effect that affects how the percussion sounds. So I said in my program notes that I thought of the trio as a machine and that each person in the trio is a cog in the wheel and so conceptually it's this meta-machine.

Sofy: So why SEAMUS?

Kelley: It seemed to fit as per SEAMUS vision of electronics and I can't remember if they had any requirements, but I remember reading the call and thinking of this piece. So I decided to try.



Sofy: What are your thoughts on the canceled conference and what's happening instead?

Kelley: I guess leading up to it was really excited because Annea Lockwood was one of the honored composers that year, and I was excited to meet her, coz I am a fan of her work, so that was a bit of a bummer. But the good thing about this is it's online so we can see the works and still get to experience the music and everything that came out of that. And now it continues to live on afterwards, for instance this interview, that is happening months later. I definitely support the decision to keep everyone safe online. It gives all of us something to do during this quarantine time.

Sofy: If your piece had an astrological sign? What would it be?

Kelley: Maybe a Leo. Coz it's kind of loud and proud and really just demands a lot of attention from the performers — they really have to be on their A game.

Sofy: Tell me about something you discovered while composing this piece?

Kelley: I discovered I really like writing for percussion and percussionists, coz they're just down to try new things and that's definitely a lot of fun for the composer.

Sofy: If you had to put your piece into a concert with a theme, what would that theme be and why?

Kelley: LOUD. The theme would be Loud & Delicate perhaps. Almost everything about the piece is loud, there are very few sections that are quiet for contrast, the delicate is the risky aspect of the no-input mixer itself, it's a little delicate, it reacts very strongly to the slightest touch. Tightrope walking would be another good theme, something very risky and rewarding. High Stakes.

Sofy: Tell me something about your work process as you made this piece.

Kelley: All my works usually involve a very hands on approach and Talk Circus was no different. So, for this piece, I was often at the no-input mixer listening to sounds and figuring out what could be possible and then translating it all into notation.

Sofy: What kind of novel (to you) techniques did you use in making this piece?

Kelley: The whole piece is built around incorporating a no-input mixer (and feedback), so while I use NiPM in my improvisational work, conceiving of notation for it as well as placing it in concert settings fundamentally means the entire work required a lot of new (to me and maybe others) techniques.

Sofy: What are you excited about?

Kelley: I'm looking forward to the next SEAMUS, in whatever form that may take.

Sofy: Please have your piece take the Myers-Briggs personality test and tell me if it is accurate.

Kelley: ESFP. The description of this type says it's very spontaneous which feels fitting for a piece incorporating feedback.

Sofy: Does your piece process feel finished or will you continue to explore in the direction of the piece?

Kelley: This piece feels finished. I'm always exploring new uses of feedback but in this piece, it does what I set out to do so and so I'm happy with it. In **Talk Circus** using percussive instruments, contact microphones, and a no-input mixer (NiPM) a new sound world, or "machine" emerges. Through this machine, intrinsic bonds between instrument and low/high-tech electronics are formed. In this piece, two percussionists use instruments affixed with contact mics that feed a mixer configured into a no-input pattern. A mixer set into such a pattern becomes an independent source for a variety of electronic sounds. With this set up, the NiPM becomes an instrument in-and-of itself as well as a source to morph and "sample" the input of the percussive instruments. Furthermore, since the contact microphone of each percussionist connects to the NiPM thereby connecting to each other and forming a tight trio. This integrates each musician on stage into one unit; each musician forming a cog-in-the-wheel, and each person connecting to another in an entirely new and unique way. (<https://www.kelleysheehan.com/>)

Rachel Gibson

Rachel Gibson is a percussionist and music technologist from Tower City, Pennsylvania. She is currently attending the University of Virginia to pursue a Ph.D. in Music Composition and Computer Technologies. Rachel studied percussion with Michael Rosen and Bob Nowak and computer music with Aurie Hsu and Abby Aresty. She completed additional computer music studies with Edgar Berdahl and Stephen Beck. Rachel has performed in the Oberlin Percussion Group, Oberlin Orchestra, Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble, and the Oberlin Improvisation and New-Music Collective (OINC). She was the recipient of the Avedis Zildjian Conservatory Percussion Award, the Oberlin College Research Fellowship, the Presser Award, a National Science Foundation REU Fellowship, the SEAMUS Allen Strange Award, and the Phi Kappa Lambda Prize. Rachel has presented her work at the NIME and TEI conferences. She earned her Bachelor of Music degree at Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Percussion Performance and Technology in Music and Related Arts (TIMARA).

Sofy: *Tell me something about your work process as you made this piece.*

Rachel: One cool fact about the piece is that I made it in a month during September 2019. IRIS was making its debut at a concert at my undergraduate institution, Oberlin Conservatory, at the beginning of October, so I guess it had to be finished at some point so I could spend time practicing it! Another cool fact is that I don't think I really put too much thought into making it! I just relied on intuition, and I think that worked out okay.

Sofy: *What is one of your inspirations?*

Rachel: I think my main inspirations are John Cage, Sigur Ros, and Doctor Who. For me, John Cage brings together percussion music and computer music; I want to live in the sound world of Sigur Ros; and I want to channel the fantastical and whimsical nature of Doctor Who.

Sofy: *Briefly, what is this piece about?*

Rachel: Hmm... I don't think the piece has a direct meaning or story, but maybe it was more about creating an immersive environment for the performer and audience (which is why I think the first half of the title is called "Skyscapes"). I think the only thing I wrote for program notes is "The night sky looks good on you"

because of the night sky light projections that come from IRIS. When you come close to it, you get to wear some of the projections yourself — and I think it looks great on anyone!

Sofy: *Why did you apply to SEAMUS?*

Rachel: There is a nice backstory to this question. In 2016, I was a first-year student at Oberlin studying classical percussion. My friend, Hunter Brown (who was in his last year and also a percussion and computer music major), applied to SEAMUS with his percussion and electronics piece, *Bicorporal*, and won the 2017 Allen Strange Award, which is how I found out about it. I was secretly hoping throughout my time at Oberlin that I would win the same award during my last year of being an undergraduate student, but kept that hope under wraps. Now the secret is out!

Sofy: *What are your feelings on SEAMUS being an on-line event this year?*

Rachel: I think it was for the best, given the pandemic situation. The most positive aspect of online conferences is that they are much more accessible to people who might have not been able to attend. Hopefully, artists' works were able to reach a wider audience. I hope national associations like SEAMUS keep this in mind in the future if conferences go back to being in person. And! Being a broke college student, I did save money on travel, so that was the brighter side of things.



Sofy: *What kind of novel (to you) techniques did you use in making this piece?*

Rachel: I was learning how to use Wekinator (created by Rebecca Fiebrink) during summer 2019, and I ended up using that software to map some gestures around IRIS. So that "technique" was new to me at the time. I also improvised with IRIS to decide what I liked the most.

Sofy: *What did you discover while composing?*

Rachel: Because I was using Wekinator to map movement around IRIS, sometimes I would get unexpected sounds or have unexpected interactions with IRIS as I was experimenting. It helped me to think of her as my otherworldly friend.

Sofy: *What are you excited about?*

Rachel: Hmm...currently, I am excited about being a new graduate student at the University of Virginia and living in Charlottesville. I am already proud of the music program here because quite a few people who have come out of this department are those who I look up to. It's like...I want to be these people when I grow up!

Sofy: *What is your relationship to SEAMUS / why is it the right venue?*

Rachel: I'm a new member of SEAMUS, as of last year, but I get the impression that it is a very welcoming community. I feel like I could have gone in prior years, but never made it there for whatever reason. I have faith that eventually I will make it to an in-person SEAMUS! For now, SEAMUS will remain an elusive creature.

Sofy: *What astrological sign is your piece — do you think it matches those characteristics?*

Rachel: Probably Aquarius (only because I googled it briefly, and it looked like it was a good match).

Sofy: *Since our search results are tailored to us I am curious about yours specifically. What did your Google result say?*

Rachel: It came out with "Those under the Aquarius sign are shy and quiet, but can be eccentric and energetic." It is also an "air" sign, which is neat because IRIS is similar to the theremin in where you don't touch the instrument to play it.

Sofy: *Please have your piece take the Myers-Briggs personality test and tell me if it is accurate.*

Rachel: Oooh, I was contemplating putting down INFP without actually taking the test because it felt like it would be its personality type. I ended up taking the test anyway and received the same type! So, I guess INFP is the piece's true personality type after all.

Sofy: *Does your piece process feel finished or will you continue to explore these kinds of things?*

Rachel: I would like to think my piece feels finished. I don't like letting something go unfinished! I hope to make another piece with IRIS sometime in the near future though.

Sofy: *If you had to put your piece on a concert with a theme — what would that theme be and why?*

Rachel: I think this piece would work well on an astronomy or space-themed concert. Or maybe a planetarium concert! I would have loved to see how well IRIS would work in a planetarium or a dome-shaped room. Or a kids' concert. I'd like to think IRIS is friendly to children.

"The night sky looks good on you." Skyscapes // The Night Shines For You was composed for IRIS, or InfraRed Instrument of Stars, a dodecahedron-shaped instrument based on children's star lamps. A simple melody and accompanying texture seeks to bring a sense of wonder and whimsy into the performance. IRIS has twenty infrared proximity sensors that are installed onto its panels. Each side has two sensors and features a laser-cut constellation map. The lights inside IRIS allow it to project its constellations onto the walls of the performance space.

Wekinator, a machine learning software by Rebecca Fiebrink, was used to map the sensor data. It learns to recognize certain hand positions around IRIS, which are then mapped to specific sounds in the Max patch. IRIS is fairly accurate at recognizing hand positions, but sometimes it acts on its own accord. Ultimately, IRIS creates an immersive visual and auditory experience for both the performer and the audience.

You can find out more at: <http://www.rachelkgibson.net>

Rodney DuPlessis

In his music and research, Rodney DuPlessis explores the intersections and boundaries of physics, chaos, psychoacoustics, human-computer interaction, and novel synthesis techniques. The sonic results are often equal parts visceral and cerebral. His music has won multiple awards and was recently nominated for the SEAMUS/ASCAP prize. As a programmer, DuPlessis develops synthesis, control, and sound transformation software that expands the artist's toolbox. As a producer, he's directed multiple festivals and concerts. His teachers have included Curtis Roads, Clarence Barlow, João Pedro Oliveira, and Martin Kutnowski. He's currently finishing a PhD and MSc at UCSB.

Sofy: Tell me something about your work process as you made this piece.

Rodney: Feverish composition with almost no sleep for two weeks at Annette Vande Gorne's Musiques & Recherches studio in Ohain, Belgium. It was very intense, but also rewarding. I live for that feeling of flow when I lock into something and can't stop until it's finished.

Sofy: What is one of your inspirations?

Rodney: My main inspirations aside from sound itself are scientific models. I'm just drawn to pattern and abstraction. I read a lot of scientific books and articles, it's one way I try to make sense of my world. Writing music about it is another way.

Sofy: What is this piece about?

Rodney: When I wrote this piece I had just finished reading "Lost in Math" by Sabine Hossenfelder. She poses that some branches of scientific inquiry have lost their way in pursuit of a mathematically pretty theory. I was especially intrigued by a reference she made to an equation formulated by Gian Giudice to evaluate the "naturalness" of a theory. In Dimensionless, I was trying to explore this concept of naturalness in physics and the part of human desire from which it stems. I even use the Giudice equation in some subtle ways.

Sofy: Why did you apply to SEAMUS?

Rodney: I have friends that have been to the conference several times and they spoke highly of it. I've never applied before this year. I've presented at ICMC and some music festivals, but SEAMUS wasn't

really on my radar for some reason. I guess I finally heard enough about it from friends that I decided to go for it this year.

Sofy: What kind of novel (to you) techniques did you use in making this piece?

Rodney: The secret sauce is simple convolution. There are granular textures and gestures in the piece but I barely used any "granulation" plugins. I was able to get more naturally chaotic particle patterns by going straight to the source (of chaos) — nature.

Sofy: What did you discover while composing?

Rodney: Beauty in the space between sounds. A new way to listen. What the mind can do when deprived of sleep. Ultimately, I discovered a lot about who I am in relation to the world while writing the piece. It was scary.

Sofy: What are you excited about?

Rodney: I'm excited to meet these awesome people at SEAMUS I've heard so much about. I'm excited to see old friends. I'm excited to visit a part of the country I've never been to. I'm excited to have late-night life-changing conversations that I'll forget by morning.

Sofy: What is your relationship to SEAMUS / why is it the right venue?

Rodney: SEAMUS is a friend of a friend of mine. Our mutual friends won't shut-up about him so I've finally decided to meet him and see what I'm missing. In all seriousness though, it's a real honor to be nominated for the SEAMUS/ASCAP prize and its a really nice welcome into the SEAMUS community.



Sofy: *What astrological sign is your piece — do you think it matches those characteristics?*

Rodney: My piece was born at a strange anomalous moment in time when the other celestial bodies had no effect on life on Earth except for the tides. I think it was high-tide at the time which probably means my piece is flighty and prone to angry outbursts. I'd say that's fairly accurate.

Sofy: *Please have your piece take the Myers-Briggs personality test and tell me if it is accurate.*

Rodney: ENTJ-T. But Carl Jung would probably classify the piece as deeply troubled.

Sofy: *Does your piece process feel finished or will you continue to explore these kinds of things?*

Rodney: The piece had to end because I had to perform it at a concert at the end of the intense two weeks of writing. Honestly, at the time I felt like it wasn't long enough, like I could elaborate on some of the material. Now I realize that it says a lot in a short time (3 minutes) and that that concision is part of its charm. I am strongly considering writing a Part 2 or a kind of second movement though.

Sofy: *If you had to put your piece on a concert with a theme — what would that theme be and why?*

Rodney: Maybe a theme of music that mixes sounds recorded in very distant parts of the world. I recorded sound in Australia, California, and Europe for this piece.

About the piece:

Dimensionless is inspired by the concept of "naturalness" in physics. Seemingly far removed from most common conceptions of "naturalness" yet closely related, in physics the term refers to the order of the dimensionless ratios between parameters (the most "natural" theories ought to have dimensionless ratios of order 1) and the level of fine-tuning (a good theory ought not to have fine-tuned parameters). The conflict between this widely applied concept on the one hand and the promise of science to shed all bias in pursuit of truth on the other, guided my meditation within the soundscape of this piece.

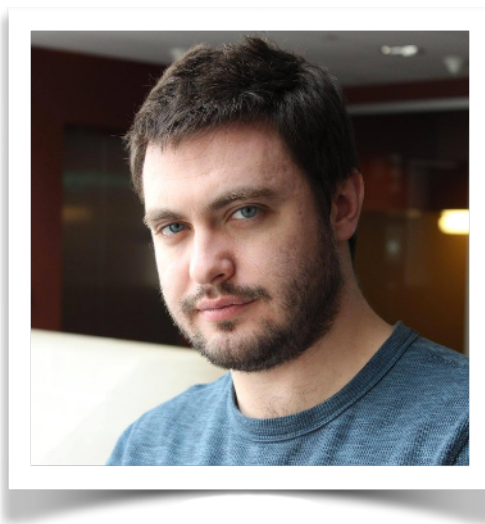
Speaking of the soundscape, the sounds were all recorded by me in various places over a very busy Summer in 2019: Australia (in the snowy Australian Alps), Paris, Brussels, Siena, and Santa Barbara. The blending and processing of sounds reflects the tension

between nature and naturalness; the way things are and the way we want things to be. I composed and mixed the final result at Musiques et Recherches in Ohain, Belgium in August 2019.

More at: www.rodneyplessis.com

Nicolas Chuaqui

Praised for its "sharp and precise imagery," the music of Nicolas Chuaqui has been recognized for its interest and imagination. His musical interests coalesce around the relationships between musical memory, time, and the overall impression of the work; his studies in literature and creative writing have caused him to experiment with narrative. Often a single idea is extended, but in a way that blurs the distinction between what is new or old. A specific image or moment is often the starting point, as it is in his recent song cycle *Apocalyptic Visions*; in the third song, for example, the resonances and constituent parts of this "vision" swirl around one another, creating something both familiar and unfamiliar at once. His acoustic music has been heard at many of the country's prominent showcases for young composers, such as June in Buffalo, and has been performed by such well-recognized ensembles as the Arditti Quartet and The Crossing. His music incorporating electronic media has been featured at several important venues, such as the International Computer Music Conference, New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, and Diffrazioni Multimedia Festival (Florence, Italy). His vocal and operatic music has been awarded by various organizations, and his first opera, *The Forest of Dreams*, was premiered in a fully-staged production by New Voices Opera in 2016.



Sofy: *What inspired you to write this piece and what inspired you to submit it to SEAMUS in the first place?*

Nic: The piece “of memories” has four movements and it’s based on Rome. I went on a trip to Rome which was really nice and I just felt really inspired by how old everything is. I was really taken with how there will be just some ancient thing, right next to you, as you are walking around. So this piece is based on these 4 pictures that we took, and these general impressions that I felt when I was standing on the bridge over looking the Tiber river, the second movement is in the temple of the Vestal Virgins, there’s these statues that are just kinda crazy disembodied statues coz they’ve been eroded by the wind so much, and I got this really intimate feeling there, so what I tried to capture the feelings and the images of these four locations in the piece. And that’s the piece! The four movements comment on each other a little bit coz they’re all of the same city and so they make a circle.

Sofy: *Why did you pick SEAMUS / why is it the right venue?*

Nic: I sent the piece into SEAMUS because the SEAMUS ASCAP award is a high-profile thing and I really want to get this sound out there, and it’s an American organization, and that’s where I am. It’s easier to have access, have a conversation, and work with places geographically closer to you. I’ve been following it for a long time, coz I see it as the pre-eminent electronic music organization of the US, and it presents so many electro-acoustic works. With my piece being for cello, piano and electronics, I think fits well with what goes on in SEAMUS.

Sofy: *If your piece had an astrological sign, what would it be?*

Nic: That’s a really good question. It’s a fitting one because the different movements deal with natural forces. The first movement is about a river, and deals with water. The second movement is kind of about wind, and then it’s probably air and fire in there somewhere. I am an Aquarius so I would say Aquarius, because in the first movement something I found interesting was the idea that this river is so ancient but of course, the river is always changing. Like that famous parable “You can never walk into the same river twice.” Said by an ancient, famous, Greek person. So yeah, probably Aquarius, the symbol of water, and movement forward through time, just going with the flow.

Sofy: *What were you excited about in term of going to the conference and having your work presented?*

Nic: I definitely was looking forward to it because I was excited to present my work, that was chosen for it’s own merits, and I was excited to meet all the people there. I was committing to really go and do everything, go to every panel, every event — and of course this conference is the one that ends up being canceled. In terms of what happens instead; I think that it’s great that the works are presented to the extent that they are, and I think I’m just happy with the fact that the piece is a finalist and that’s a good feeling. It’s too bad it won’t get played live, but it’s been played before and hopefully it will be played again!

Sofy: *Tell me something about your work process as you made this piece.*

Nic: I created the piece movement by movement, and the number of movements and features of the movements were affected by the existing movements I had completed. For each of the four movements, I basically sketched out the sound world before realizing it electronically, which is a way that I like to work. I sketched out the various parameters of the sounds I wanted, and how they would develop. Of course, I made many changes to the sounds as I realized them.

Sofy: *What is one of your inspirations?*

Nic: I definitely feel strong inspiration when I experience or recall certain moments, both visually and with the other senses. This piece is very much about that — in each movement I was communicating my overall impression of a specific moment. The moments are often mysterious and peaceful, though not always. I do feel a connection to Debussy, Ravel, Messiaen, and the many other composers who sort-of ‘live in the moment’ in a way, though I don’t think I necessarily have any stylistic connections to them.

Sofy: *What kind of novel (to you) techniques did you use in making this piece?*

Nic: Actually, sketching the sounds out on paper was something I had not done very much before this.

Sofy: *What did you discover while composing?*

Nic: One of the most common things that happens as I write music is that I pare down my ideas. This is true of this piece and of many of mine. This piece, though, is perhaps the most spare piece I’ve ever written, so the

experience of writing this piece took me to a new place.

Sofy: *Please have your piece take the Myers-Briggs personality test and tell me if it is accurate*

Nic: INFP. It's as accurate as any personality test, which means that it's accurate most days of the week.

Sofy: *Does your piece process feel finished or will you continue to explore in the direction of this piece?*

Nic: I think I will continue to explore. I think every piece I've written can bring me back to the world I was in when I was creating it, but at the same time, I try to write every piece on its own terms. Because this one uses so few materials (especially the third movement), though, I think it will have a particularly strong influence on me. I went further than I usually do in paring things down, and that seems to have opened up some new possibilities.

Sofy: *If you had to put your piece on a concert with a theme — what would that theme be and why?*

Nic: I think the piece, especially since it references images, would go well with other works inspired by imagery or visual art. I have also considered projecting the images during the piece, but I've always decided against it since I didn't write the piece with that in mind, and I think that would ultimately distract from the "imagined" images.

You can find out more at www.nicolaschuaqui.com

David Quang-Minh Nguyen

David Q. Nguyen holds a BM from Old Dominion University where he studied with Andrey R. Kasparov and Mark Chambers. He has received his Masters and pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where his primary teachers are Reynold Tharp, Erik Lund, Eli Fieldsteel, Sever Tipei and Scott A. Wyatt. His current musical output is multi-channel electroacoustic works dealing with sound spatialization.

Sofy: *Tell me something about your work process as you made this piece*

David: I found myself exploring sound qualities of found objects, particularly trying to extract what I find musical from found objects.

Sofy: *What is one of your inspirations?*

David: I was inspired by anamorphic art. I found it interesting that the image does not move and the beholder has to move to see the real thing.

Sofy: *What is this piece about?*

David: The piece is about dramaturgy through indecisions, gesture exaggeration rather than development.

Sofy: *Why did you apply to SEAMUS?*

David: I applied to SEAMUS, because it's a tradition within the university to apply every year.

Sofy: *What kind of novel (to you) techniques did you use in making this piece?*

David: I mainly spatialized through amplitude panning, reverb manipulation, and a variety of stereo technique in a multichannel context.

Sofy: *What did you discover while composing?*

David: I discovered ways of exploring different ways for dramaturgy. I also discovered the beauty of stereo thinking through working with multichannel.

Sofy: *What are you excited about?*

David: I'm excited for this pandemic to be over because I want to be able to go to music conferences/festivals / concerts.

Sofy: *What is your relationship to SEAMUS / why is it the right venue?*

David: I like being part of an electroacoustic community and its the right venue because SEAMUS presents a variety of electroacoustic aesthetics.

Sofy: *What astrological sign is your piece — do you think it matches those characteristics?*

David: Weight Stranding was composed in about nine months and the piece premiered on April 20, 2019, so it must be a Taurus. The Chinese zodiac is an Earth Pig. I don't think Weight Stranding matches these characteristics, maybe from a different perspective it could possibly match these astrological signs.

Sofy: *Please have your piece take the Myers-Briggs personality test and tell me if it is accurate.*

David Quang-Minh Nguyen: Myers-Briggs does not account for ambiverts.

Sofy: *Does your piece process feel finished or will you continue to explore these kinds of things?*

David Quang-Minh Nguyen: I feel like I need to explore more of the piece's concept with a second movement.

Sofy: *If you had to put your piece on a concert with a theme — what would that theme be and why?*

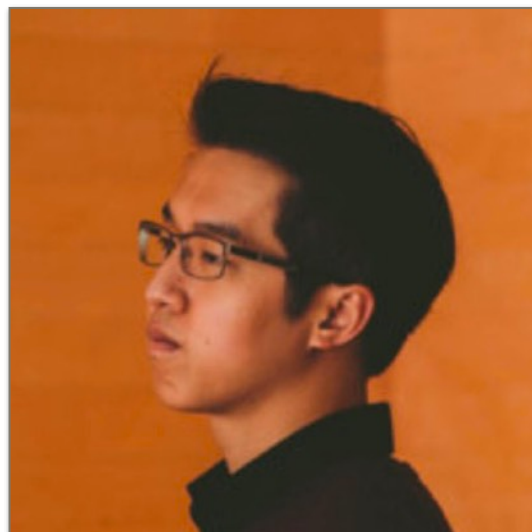
David Quang-Minh Nguyen: The theme of the concert would have to be "Acousmatic works" because this piece definitely needs at least 8 speakers and possibly an acousmonium for live diffusion.

The light and the heavy
The static and the wet
The oblique and the reflective
The tight and the loose
Precisely indecisive

Weight Stranding was inspired by anamorphic art, as the piece explores exaggerated sound qualities and processes of each of the aforementioned pairs of adjectives. There are essentially two types of anamorphic art; the first is oblique where the distorted image is immovable (static) and the beholder has to change their point of view to see the real image. The second is catoptric (mirror), where the image is completely distorted and upon placing a mirror at the center the true image is revealed. The two types of anamorphic art relate to **Weight Stranding** by utilizing excessive manipulation of stereo imaging in a multichannel context.

Through form and musical gestures the pair of contrasting adjectives describes the qualities and processes of each corresponding section of the piece, but each pair can also be used to describe every section in terms of the sound quality and/or the sound process. This results in a piece that can be heard as monolithic but still remains linear, as traditionally we listen to music from beginning to end. Each section can live on its own, but all are connected through exaggeration (precision) instead of development (indecisive) of the qualities and processes of the musical material. The qualities and processes can be

heard as a metaphor: as we all carry our own personal Weight our qualities and processes become motionless, and life is Stranding us, engulfed, in the moment both figuratively and literally.



About Sofy:

Sofy (@horusVacui) is a site-specific media artist and educator working with sound, video, interactivity, projections, code, paper, and salvaged material. Her work focuses on techno-occult rituals, street performance, and participatory art. Sofy's performances enact and reframe hegemonies, she works with materials that exemplify our deep entanglement with petro-culture and technology's affect on consciousness. She has worked on projects at Eyebeam, 3LD, the Netherlands Institute voor Media Kunst, Steim, ARS Electronica, Games for Learning Institute, The Guggenheim (NYC), The National Mall and has taught at GAFFTA, MoMA, NYU, Srishti, and the Rubin Museum. She is a PhD Candidate in Audio-Visual Composition at NYU GSAS.





Member News

Eric Chasalow is announcing a new digital release, coming on November 13, 2020 (to be followed by limited edition vinyl),

Ghosts of Our Former Selves

The album is a big departure in many ways from Eric's previous electroacoustic releases, including ten genre-bending songs about memory, loss, tradition, and our political reality. Many songs combine instruments and voice with electronics. Others are simple, vulnerable and stripped down, as in for example, the title track, which features the Lydian String Quartet.

more information at ericchasalow.com



Transient Canvas (**Amy Advocat**, bass clarinet & Matt Sharrock, marimba) will release their third album entitled "Right now, in a second" on the New Focus Recordings label on October 16, 2020. The album features commissioned music by Barbara White, Jonathan Bailey Holland, Emily Koh, Crystal Pascucci, Clifton Ingram, Stefanie Lubkowski, and Keith Kirchoff.

Boston-based contemporary duo **Transient Canvas** is on a mission to revolutionize the modern concert experience. Since 2011, their innovative performances have been praised as "superb" by the Boston Globe and "disarming" by Cleveland Classical, with the San Francisco Chronicle lauding "the versatile imagination they both display and inspire in others." Bass clarinetist Amy Advocat and marimbist Matt Sharrock relish the creative potential of working with living composers, having amassed a varied repertoire of over 80 commissioned works in addition to working with hundreds of student composers from all over the world.

For more information a www.transientcanvas.com.



Aine E. Nakamura started her Woman Artist-in-Residence in Hospital and Recovery: "My body, my heart, my spirit." (<https://evaaine.com/woman-artist-in-residence>).

The artist states: "I will create three main works during this residency. The first work was about 'cherishing my

body.' The second work will be about life. The final work will be about my womanness I will find."

The artist's manifesto:

"My spirit and my heart have fostered kindness to see unseen things even when I faced difficulties and illness in my body.

I used to walk, wondering about a squirrel's body laid at full length beside the Bronx River--it had been wrapped in leaves, soil, and wind.

I still think about it.

A stone has been an art and charm for me.

I hope to do one or two things in the limited time of a day.

Health cannot be measured by issues in a body.

*By facing them by myself,
the depth of my spirit becomes mine.*

My body is mine.

I will have a third surgery soon.

*Starting from June 30 2020 until March 31 2021,
I will find, meet and create my own woman's body
without shaping it from others' illusion.*

*It will be my time of my art of voice and body from my
inner creation.*

*This artist-in-residence will be the place for me to hold
such strength and kindness for myself to do this art.*

*Another thing I will protect is my transnational
complexity and ambiguity.*

I will keep them as are.

*My new language is
my song, art.*

*I celebrate individualities as I treasure mine.
So now I begin."*



In January, the **Beo String Quartet** performed **Charles Nichols'** three-movement *Or Be Forever Fallen*, for amplified string quartet and computer, with video by Zach Duer, on concerts in Pennsylvania. In May, Beo recorded audio and video of their performance, that Nichols and Duer formatted into spatial audio and immersive video, posted online in lieu of canceled performances: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePOSHrrwXws>.

Beo also performed a movement of Nichols' *In Gratitude*, for string quartet, online for the Charlotte New Music Festival, in June: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0f1-B3mPJL0>. Also for the festival, Nichols co-taught the Max Computer Music Workshop, with Christopher Dobrian, culminating in an online concert of pieces composed by the participants.

On electric violin and computer, Nichols performed with his band Modality, in July, streaming real-time audio between Montana and Virginia, for the Network Music Festival: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkTEEHn37Ig>. Modality also released a 25 minute single titled "Everything Utopian", in May, recorded during an online session: <https://modality.bandcamp.com/track/everything-utopian>, in preparation for releasing their new album *Megacycles*, on vinyl and online.

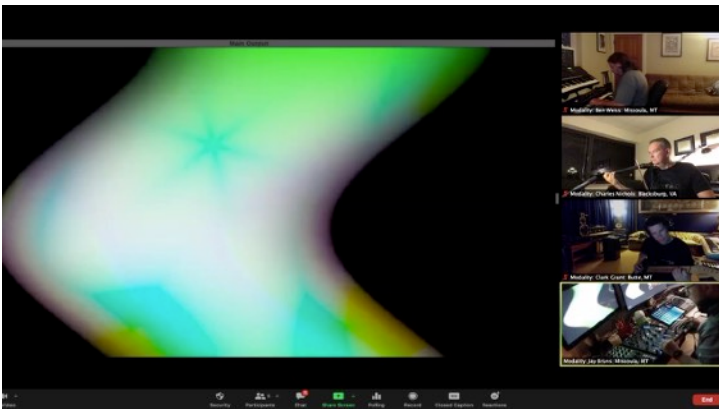




In Gratitude, by Charles Nichols, performed online by the Beo String Quartet



Or Be Forever Fallen, by Charles Nichols and Zach Duer, recorded for spatial audio and immersive video by the Beo String Quartet



For the Love of One, performed telematically for the Network Music Festival by Modality

"Secrets, Dreams, Faith and Wonder" has its 60th festival performance:

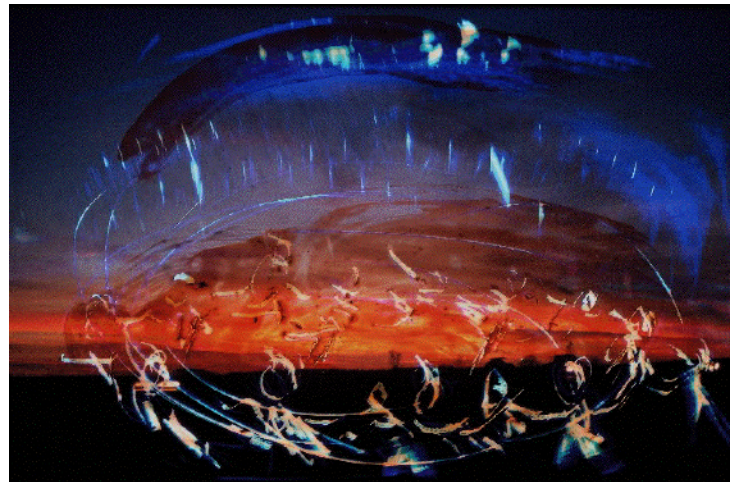
Stephen Travis Pope's feature-length visual-music film "Secrets, Dreams, Faith and Wonder: A Mass for the New Millennium" has had a very busy year in 2020

with its 60th film festival screening and winning laurels for Best Experimental Film (Sydney, Jerusalem and Cadiz), Best Music Video (Dhaka, Paris and Rome) and Best Sound Design (Rajasthan, Paris) among many others this year alone.

"Secrets, Dreams, Faith and Wonder" is a non-narrative "visual music" film; its five movements (the short-subject contains one section from each movement) use computer animation, painted film, and photographic sources (together with an original electronic-music soundtrack), and map loosely onto the sections of the catholic mass (but with an epistle lesson from Martin Luther King and a credo by Mahatma Gandhi).

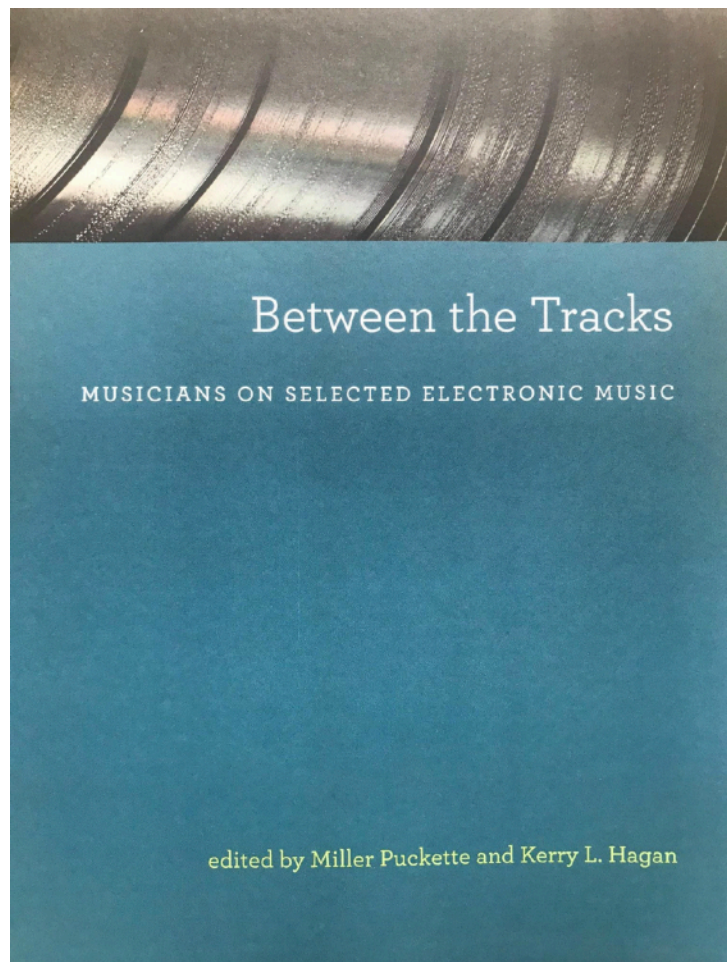
The film's web site (with 4-minute trailer) is at, <http://HeavenEverywhere.com/Secrets> and

<https://vimeo.com/92867679>



Miller Puckette and **Kerry Hagan** recently published a collected volume that includes many SEAMUS members as authors. The title is *Between the Tracks: Musicians on Selected Electronic Music*, published by MIT Press.

Authors include: Yvette Jackson, Valentina Bertolani, Leigh Landy, Miller Puckette, Jøran Rudi, David Rosenboom, Margaret Schedel, Taylor Ackley, Marc Battier, Kerry Hagan, Pamela Madsen, Laura Zattra and Juliana Snapper.



Christopher Bailey released his album *Harvest Kitchen*, of acousmatic music this past spring. <https://christopherbailey.bandcamp.com/album/harvest-kitchen>

DESCRIPTION:

4 acousmatic computer-music works, all re-mastered and re-mixed in the last couple of years, spanning work from 2000 until 2019. *Sand* (2000-2002), *Harvest Kitchen* Parts 1 and 2 (2007-2015), and *Divertimento in Eb* (2009). The pieces were given extensive sonic

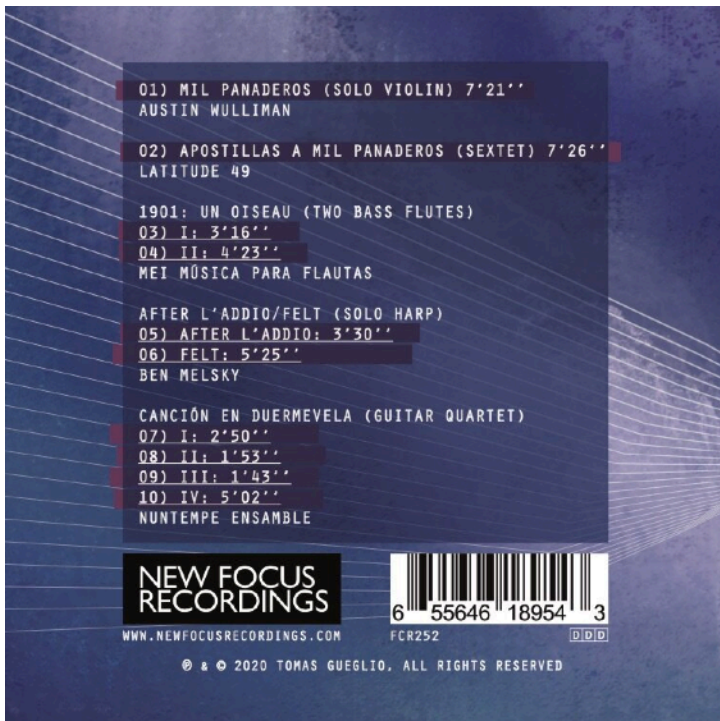
treatment with vintage analog mastering gear, as well as a number of plugins, working with mixing/mastering engineer and musician Augustus Arnone. The *Harvest Kitchen* pieces are the centerpiece of the album, structured as 8-channel works whose 4 stereo pairs act as ensembles or instruments in a quartet. They have been featured at former SEAMUS conferences, albeit in curtailed versions to conform with time limits. Here, they are un-abridged. The main album tracks are stereo versions of the pieces, supplemented by BONUS tracks which include the 4 stereo pairs (= 8 mono stems) needed to play the pieces in their full octophonic glory. The work *Sand*, appearing as a complete, 25' work on the album, also comes in the form of a MAX listener-interface (linked to in the notes), which allows for listeners to explore the work interactively, pulling apart the polyphony in myriad ways, and setting up loops and repetition in order to get to know the music's quirky material.



Tomás Gueglio released his first portrait album *Duermevela* via New Focus Recordings:

<http://tomasgueglio.com/duermevela>





Elizabeth Hoffman was selected by SEAMUS (Society of Electroacoustic Music in the U.S.) as one of three composers to represent the organization at the International Confederation of Electroacoustic Music – CIME / ICEM–annual conference on September 26. Her composition selected: *Clouds Pattern* (2019) 8-channel sound (in a stereo version).



Gabriel McDerment led Quarantine Collective (feat. Skykey, John R. Akins, Josh Oxford, Francisco Dean, Li-Chuan Chong, and Lannier Sammons) that made a piece with clips from 3 continents to remind people that, in this time of quarantine, people are never alone. Video: <https://youtu.be/3ZLK9lvD9LE>

McDerment also is interning at SUPERBANDS, a non-profit that uses music to aid mental health in teens, and Harvard C-CHANGE (at Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health), where McDerment makes videos and write music that spreads information about Climate Change that can help society get to a solution. He was named an Honorable Mention at the Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge by the National Endowment for



the Arts and the American Theatre Wing. McDerment's composition "Students Anew" was programmed on Pete Stollery's "COVID-19 Sound Map" and the "Cities and Memory" soundmap.



The Center for Research in Electronic Art Technology (CREATE) at UC Santa Barbara has released a new software app for sound granulation: **EmissionControl2** for MacOSX, Linux, and Windows. EmissionControl2 is a granular sound synthesizer. The theory of granular synthesis is described in the book *Microsound* (Curtis Roads, 2001, MIT Press).

The new app was developed by a team consisting of **Curtis Roads** acting as project manager, with software developers **Jack Kilgore** and **Rodney DuPlessis**.

Features of the software include:

- Granulation of multiple sound files simultaneously (up to 1 GB of samples can be loaded)
- Supports up to 2048 simultaneous grains (limited by the user's hardware)
- Synchronous and asynchronous grain emission
- Intermittency control

- Per-grain signal processing (envelope, waveform, amplitude, frequency, spatial position, filter center frequency, and resonance)
- Modulation control of all granulation parameters with six LFOs (bipolar or unipolar waveforms)
- Real-time display of peak amplitude, grain counter, waveform, scan range, scanner, and grain emission
- Scalable GUI and font size
- MIDI Learn enables mapping to any MIDI continuous controller
- Unlimited user presets with smooth interpolation for gestural design
- Code is open source and available at GitHub

Coded entirely in C++, the app uses the Allolib multimedia software library available on GitHub. "Allolib was created to support the distributed audiovisual system of the UCSB AlloSphere," according to lead developer Dr. Andrés Cabrera, CREATE Research Director. Cabrera consulted on the Windows version.

EmissionControl2 is a free and open-source software download available [here](#).



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