

Visiting Artist Series

# PLAYGROUND ENSEMBLE

ADVENTUROUS MUSIC NOW

## MOVIE NIGHT!

A multimedia evening of chamber music and video featuring works selected from an international call for scores, digital short stories, and short films by area filmmakers.



**MUSIC** at  
**MSU DENVER**

**OCTOBER 27**

King Center Concert Hall, 7:30 pm

**FREE** to MSU Denver Community

Tickets \$16, \$12, \$10

More information: 303-615-1010 | [msudenver.edu/music](http://msudenver.edu/music) | King Center Box Office: 303-556-2296

# Program

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Music at MSU Denver Presents  
The Playground Ensemble  
King Center Concert Hall  
October 27, 2019  
7:30 pm



*Fantasies of Downfall*..... Johannes Kreidler

*Black Robin* ..... Johanna Ruotsalainen

*frostbYte- chalk outline*..... Daniel Blinkhorn

*Crazytown*..... David Jason Snow

## Intermission

*Thresholds*..... David Bird

*Excerpts from Textures*..... Sean Winters

*City Beats*..... Austin Yip

*tilia Littleleaf linden (tree dialogue 1)* ..... film by Joseph Steele  
Soundpainting by Conrad Kehn

*Soundtracks to Movies That Don't Exist*..... Conrad Kehn



**Johannes Kreidler** (1980) studied from 2000 to 2006 at the Musikhochschule in Freiburg, Germany where teachers included Mathias Spahlinger (composition), Mesias Manguashca and Orm Finnendahl (electronic music), and Eckehard Kiem (music theory). During this time he was also a Fellow of the European Union from 2004 to 2005 and a visiting student at the Institute of Sonology at the Koninklijk Conservatorium at The Hague in the Netherlands. He also attended seminars in philosophy and art history at the University of Freiburg. Since 2019, he is professor for composition and music theory at the Academy of Music Basel. Johannes Kreidler lives in Berlin. His work is described as conceptual music and usually employs multimedial elements.

**Johanna Ruotsalainen** (1983- ) is Finnish composer and visual artist. Recent years Ruotsalainen has collaborated with some of the most acclaimed contemporary performers, such as Mise-En Ensemble, ToolBox Percussion, Ligeti Quartet and David & Oliver Herbert. Ruotsalainen is Senior Lecturer in Music theory and composing in Oulu UAS.

Black Robin for soprano voice and piano is based on poem and animation by Simi Susanna Ruotsalainen. Tonight's performance is a world premiere.

**Daniel Blinkhorn** is an Australian composer, sound and new media artist currently residing in Sydney. He has worked in a variety of creative, academic, research and teaching contexts, and is currently lecturer in composition and music technology at the Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney. He is an ardent location field recordist, where he has embarked upon a growing number of recording expeditions throughout Africa, Alaska, Amazon, Australia, Cuba, West Indies, Mexico, Madagascar, Middle East, Northern Europe, and the high Arctic/ North Pole region of Svalbard. His creative works have received numerous international and national composition awards, and whilst self-taught in electroacoustic music, Daniel has formally studied composition and the creative arts at a number of Australian universities including the College of Fine Arts - UNSW and the Faculty of Creative Arts, UOW. More information about Daniel, as well as samples of his work can be found [www.danielblinkhorn.com](http://www.danielblinkhorn.com)

chalk outline is electroACOustic and videophonic in nature, using the Svalbard coastline (and the idea of an outline in a more generalised sense) as a metaphorical reference to the (antiquated) forensic technique of drawing a chalk outline around the deceased. The piece is an example of how I often integrate the differing disciplines of sound and image to create a sense of advocacy about the importance of places and spaces mediated via technology, sonification and visualisation. Central to the piece are location- based field recordings I made whilst on expedition throughout the Arctic region of Spitsbergen | Svalbard.

Positioned at 81° north, 10° East, the archipelago of Spitsbergen | Svalbard is a truly remarkable part of the world that continues to inspire awe and fascination and is often at the heart of our collective consciousness for its ecological and climatic sensitivity.

The region is renowned for its visual and cinematic beauty, however it should be no surprise to find that sound plays an integral and vital role in the uniqueness of the region. From the smallest sounds of popping and hissing as snow and ice melt, to the raucous thundering of glacial ice calving, sound is bonded to each and every ecosystem in the archipelago.

The compositions of **David Jason Snow** (b. 1954) have been performed in concert by the Ensemble Intercontemporain at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Banda Municipal de Bilbao at the Euskalduna Palace in Bilbao, The New Juilliard Ensemble at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and many other artists and ensembles internationally. His fixed media audio and visual works have been performed at the Musinfo Journées Art & Science Festival in Bourges, the Festival Exhibitronic in Strasbourg, the Festival Internacional de Video Arte y Música Visual in Mexico City, the Sound Thought Festival in Glasgow, Echofluxx in Prague, and the Toronto International Electroacoustic Symposium. Snow has been the recipient of awards and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Maryland State Arts Council, the ASCAP Foundation, and BMI, and he has been an artist resident at Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, New York, and the Millay Colony

## *Biographies and Program Notes*

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for the Arts in Austerlitz, New York. He holds degrees in composition from the Eastman School of Music and the Yale School of Music, where he studied with Jacob Druckman, Joseph Schwantner, Warren Benson, and Samuel Adler.

*Crazytown* (2018) is an imaginary sonification and visualization of chaotic neural activity in the cerebral cortex of an autocratic psychopath. The audio was generated on ARP and Buchla modular analog synthesizers, with digital post-processing performed in Steinberg Cubase on the Macintosh. The video, which, besides being intended for audience viewing, also serves as an animated graphic score to be interpreted by any number of improvisers, was generated with the Macintosh application Oscilloscope! by Hansi Raber.

**David Bird** is a composer and multi-media artist based in New York City. His work explores the dramatic potential of electroacoustic and mixed media environments, often highlighting the relationships between technology and the individual. His work has been performed internationally, at venues and festivals such as the MATA festival in New York City; the Gaudeamus Festival in Utrecht, Netherlands; the Wien Modern Festival in Vienna, Austria; the SPOR festival in Aarhus, Denmark; the IRCAM Manifeste Festival in Paris, France; the Festival Mixtur in Barcelona, Spain. He has composed and collaborated with groups like the Ensemble Intercontemporain, the Jack Quartet, the Bozzini Quartet, Yarn/Wire, the Talea Ensemble, Mantra Percussion, the Mivos Quartet, the Austrian Ensemble for Contemporary Music (OENM), AUDITIVVOKAL Dresden, Ensemble Proton Bern, Loadbang, the TAK Ensemble, andPlay, and the Nouveau Classical Project. He is a founding member of the New York-based chamber ensemble TAK, and an artistic-director with Qubit New Music, a non-profit group that curates and produces experimental music events in New York City.

"Thresholds" uses Jan de Bont's 1994 action film "Speed" as a primary material and structural metaphor to explore themes of late-capitalism and climate catastrophe. Godfrey Moase writes that "Our current economic system depends on capital's continuous and exponential expansion – without it there is no profit. And as capital grows so must we give up more of ourselves and our planet to serve this insatiable system." Moase argues we are held hostage by the pursuit of economic security, increasingly working harder hours for fewer wages; with this process perpetuating the inevitability of climate catastrophe.

I find an uncanny comparison with the process outlined above and the narrative device of the 1994 action film "Speed," in which a domestic terrorist arms a city bus with an explosive programmed to detonate if the speed of the bus drops below 50 miles per hour. The explosive device forces the passengers of the bus to drive faster and faster, holding on to the shallow hope of survival despite the inevitability of the vehicle running out of fuel. In "Thresholds", I aim to construct a similar scenario where the musicians are pushed to increasingly intense extremes. The work explores themes of repetition, fragmentation, and dislocation.

**Sean Winters** (b. 1984) is a composer, producer, audiovisual artist, and hacker/technologist who's lived and performed in cities and venues around the world including Jerusalem, NYC, Montréal, and Amsterdam. As an audiovisual artist, he's produced large-scale live cinema 'happenings' during multiple extended residencies at STEIM, collaborated on projects involving projection mapping and 3D video, and performed extended solo a/v 're-smashes' in art galleries (highlights include working with Angie Eng, Todd Reynolds and Luke Dubois, and handling both music and video with Ikue Mori and Zeena Parkins at Roulette in Brooklyn). Recipient of the ATLAS fellowship, Sean is currently pursuing a doctorate in composition at CU where his practice-based research focuses mainly on emerging technologies and live audiovisual performance.

*Textures* is simply an exploration of timbre, melody/harmony, form, and light. The work is comprised of ten interchangeable movements, or stücks. Tonight the Playground Ensemble will be performing three of them, including a World Premiere of Mvmnt #9 which is an audiovisual composition for conductor and video feedback.

As a composer and multimedia artist, **Austin Yip's** works investigate the relationship between literature and sound, as well as the meaning of connotation and denotation through musical and visual means. Recent works include "Koto", a chamber theatre work inspired by Yasunari Kawabata's novel of the same title; "City Beats" (2019), a work for harpsichord,

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electronics and video that challenges musical connotation; “Miles Upon Miles” (2018), a work for amplified violin and electronics that juxtaposes violin and Xinjiang Uyghur Muqam; “Project ‘Ballet de la nuit’: Eurydice” (2017), an hour-long electroacoustic work that investigates on the 17th century’s cross-casting tradition; and “Metamorphosis” (2016), an orchestral work that portrays Kafka’s novel musically.

Yip’s works are published by Donemus (Netherlands), ABRSM (UK), BabelScores (France), Ablaze Records (US), Navona Records (US), Hugo Production and Hong Kong Composers Guild. He is currently a lecturer at the Hong Kong Baptist University.

Written for harpsichord (or any keyboard instrument), electronics and video, *City Beats* (2019) investigates the relationship among time, space, and culture. The harpsichord, which was widely used in the Renaissance and Baroque period, is juxtaposed with electronics sound recorded in Hong Kong in 2019. In the work one could hear MTR announcements, pedestrian voices, audible signal for visually impaired, and many more. Some of these recordings underwent granular synthesis, sampling and filtering, some remained unchanged. The video, filmed in Taiwan by the composer, attempts to reinforce the visual-aural contradiction.

**Joseph Steele** (MDes Art & the Public Domain Harvard GSD 2016) is a Denver-based artist-curator and filmmaker from Cape Cod, currently a PhD Candidate in Critical Media Practices at CU Boulder. His dissertation topic is Archive Poiesis: dusty traces and making art in an archive.

Joe was a CU NEST Studio for the Arts Fellow in Summer ‘18 and made a film and lecture-performance on archives and dust in the NSIDC Archive and Library. He is a member of AgX Film Collective in Waltham and was a fellow at MIT’s OpenDocumentary Lab in 2017. Joe was a creative affiliate at metaLAB at Harvard from 2014 until 2017.

## *The Playground Ensemble Personnel*

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Megan Bunes- voice

Leslee Smucker- violin

David Short- cello

Sonya Yeager-Meeks- flute

Wes Leffingwell- piano and keyboards

Rache Hargroder- percussion

Conrad Kehn- electronics

Sean Winters- live video manipulation



## The Playground Ensemble

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The Playground Ensemble, in Residence at Metro State University of Denver, is the Rocky Mountain Region's premier new music group. We are professional musicians, composers, educators and fans dedicated to presenting chamber music as a living art form. In addition to an annual concert season that features the work of recognized composers, we work to cultivate a thriving local composition community. With exciting outreach programs like our innovative *Young Composers Playground* we are showing young people that classical music is vibrant, adventurous and relevant to the world they live in. We hope to inspire our audiences to not only listen, but to create! Collaboration is at the heart of the Playground's artistic vision. We commission new works by living composers, perform in support of touring improvisors, and perform regularly in libraries, galleries and museums. We work with dancers, poets, spoken word artists, visual artists, and multi-media artists, finding inspiration across disciplines and exploring new, hybrid artistic forms.

**If you want to get involved, please write us at [playground@playgroundensemble.org](mailto:playground@playgroundensemble.org) or visit [www.PlaygroundEnsemble.org](http://www.PlaygroundEnsemble.org).**



*The fully-accredited Department of Music at Metropolitan State University of Denver serves as a leader in the education of professional performers, teachers, composers, and scholars. Our location in vibrant Downtown Denver places MSU Denver's emerging student musicians in the heart of the city's rich and diverse cultural district. The King Center features state-of-the-art performance venues which host our 200+ concerts per year. Our internationally-recognized faculty are among the finest performers, scholars, and educators in the nation. We offer an innovative curriculum, vast performing opportunities on and off campus, music scholarships, and the best higher education value in Colorado.*

**Ticket proceeds benefit the String Area Endowment-Building Scholarship.**

**The Department of Music thanks you for your support!**

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