

NUMUS Turns 35: The Music of Peter Hatch

Week of March 27, 2021

Program

13:00 Blunt Music (1986)

1986 • 11 minutes • Two marimbas, two pianos

Elaine Lau, Joe Ferretti, pianos; Richard Burrows, David Klassen percussion

Program note: <https://www.peterhatch.ca/blunt-music>

Blunt Music was completed in April of 1986. The title refers to the 'bluntness' of the main body of the work - a constant, loud, driving rhythmic force from beginning to end. After a short introduction in which the pitch material of the work is introduced (it hovers between dominant seventh chords on E and Bb) the bulk of the work is concerned with various rhythmic cells which repeat a fair number of times but never in an exact fashion. The desired effect is of constant expectations of rhythm (especially metric rhythm) being met, but also constantly displaced, leaving the listener 'on edge', as with a march in which the steps get mixed up. Blunt Music was premiered by The New Art Quartet in 1987.

13:00 Ida, My Dear (1995)

1995 • 14 minutes • Instrumental theatre for trumpet/actor and tape.

(Text by Gertrude Stein)

Guy Few, trumpet

Program note: <https://www.peterhatch.ca/ida-my-dear>

Ida, My Dear draws its inspiration from two sources: the novelette 'Ida' (1937) by Gertrude Stein and the composition 'Ruby, My Dear' by Thelonius Monk. The melancholic mood of much of the piece derives from Monk's purposely 'awkward' style of playing and from the anti-heroic 'heroine' of Stein's story, who does very little but 'manages to fill her day'. The interaction of the trumpet and tape and of the live and spoken voices are intended to create a musical character as mysterious and enigmatic and Stein's Ida. The spoken voice on the tape is that of Waterloo mezzo-soprano Anne-Marie Donovan.

The work was commissioned by Guy Few through the assistance of the Ontario Arts Council. The text 'Ida' by Gertrude Stein is used with the permission of the Estate of Gertrude Stein.

14:00 Red Kryptonite (2000)

2000 • 14 minutes • for solo guitarist percussionist/narrator and electronics (Texts by Rick Baker, Peter Hatch)

Andrew Laughton, electric guitar

Program note: n/a

Red Kryptonite is an instrumental theatre work inspired by the 'talking blues' tradition. The text for the piece is based on letters from a friend, Rick Baker, written sometime in the late 1980s. His struggles with everyday life are offset by a strong inner life and an 'aesthetic' approach to everyday events. Themes of childhood memories, middle-age, health issues and the struggles of everyday life permeate both the letter and the accompanying musical material, which includes poetry and music from my own childhood. The performance calls on the music improvising skills of the performer as well as their ability to read text.

The title takes its name from a substance found in Superman comic books. Unlike the more deadly green Kryptonite, red Kryptonite's effects on Superman were temporary and unusual - sometimes causing a temporary loss of power; or to spring a twin (Red Superman); or to go blind, etc. As we grow up, we are often called up to engage in superh

12:00 Cooking with Alice (2012)

2015 • 13 minutes • for solo percussionist/narrator and electronics (Texts by Gertrude Stein, Alice Toklas and others)

Richard Burrows, percussion

Program note: <https://www.peterhatch.ca/cooking-with-alice>

Cooking with Alice is a work for solo percussion and electronics which celebrates the creative act of cooking. The title of the work refers to Alice Toklas, author Gertrude Stein's lifelong partner and herself the writer of an infamous cookbook. The work features the percussionist at work with various items found in the kitchen (all cooks are de facto percussionists!) and includes audio samples of many famous chefs at work in the kitchen. Gertrude Stein's words (from the "Food" section of her work "Tender Buttons") provide the rhythm motives that underlie the entire piece.

14:00 Black Water Elegy (2021)

2021 • 10.5 minutes • video and soundfiles

Morgan Lovell, cello

Video by Matthew Talbot-Kelly

Program note: n/a

A lament for our shared environmental concerns. (Note in development)

21:00 Three Shades of Blue (2004)

2004 • 22 minutes • for two pianos, two percussion

Joe Ferretti, Elaine Lau, Richard Burrows, Dave Klassen

Program note: <https://www.peterhatch.ca/three-shades-of-blue>

"The blues" is a well-known musical genre, characterized both by its portrayal of sadness, depression and a general lag in spirit and by its repetitive formal structure, recognizable scale and particular "blue notes" that fall outside of traditional Western music tuning systems. The three movements in my "Three Shades of Blue" reflect three different moods inspired by the traditional "blues" state we all know, but using different kinds of material. "Three Shades of Blue" was commissioned by the New Art Quartet and Dylan Benson through the assistance of the Ontario Arts Council.

Biographies

Composer and music curator Peter Hatch has composed works in a large number of genres, from orchestral and chamber music to instrumental theatre, electroacoustics and installations. Hatch's compositions are both heady and playful, profound and humorous. Peter has been very active as the artistic director of new music ensembles and festivals. He founded NUMUS Concerts and the Open Ears Festival of Music and Sound, served as Composer-in-Residence with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony and as Arts and Culture Consultant with the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics. Peter is Professor Emeritus at the Faculty of Music, Wilfrid Laurier University, where he was Professor from 1985 to 2017.