

— Program —

Until I stop breathing... (2018) by Yuan Teng Choke (b. 1994)
for Alto Saxophone, Plastic Bottles, and Electronics

Fortress of Solitude (2019) by Seth Davis (b. 1994)
for Saxophones and Electronics

Inexplicable Profusion (2018) by David Landon (b. 1986)
for Saxophone and Electronics

I can't see the "Light" (2017/2019) by Chi Him Chik (b. 1994)
for Soprano Saxophone, Implanted Light, Electronics, and Visuals

— Intermission —

Blink by Menghao Xie (b. 1997)
for Video-Installation

After-Blink (2019) by Chi Him Chik
for Alto Saxophone, Keyboard, Electronics, and Visuals

Into the SOUND(b) (2018) by Chi Him Chik
For Saxophones, Implanted Electronics, Amplification, and Visuals

— Program Notes —

Most of the time, people buy things without thinking about packaging. When they throw them away, they don't think about where they go. A large portion of plastic ends up in our oceans and an estimated amount of 12 million tons of trash are discarded every year, which is equivalent to a full truck of rubbish every single minute (according to Greenpeace). Some countries decide to burn the rubbish to solve this problem, while most of the time the wastes are not classified and they include plastic. Burning plastic will release toxic dioxin and carbon monoxide, which can cause difficulties in breathing, persistent coughing, fatigue and itchy, watery eyes, etc.

In my piece “*Until I stop breathing...*” (2018), I used some pre-recorded materials from the surroundings and requested the performer to produce sounds with plastic bottles live on stage as the main materials. They all work together with the saxophone playing, which represents the human beings, in order to symbolise and emphasise the relationships between the environment, pollutions, and humans. We should always remind ourselves the consequences if there is one day clean air and water runs out on our earth - Can we still survive?

– Vanessa Choke Yuan Teng

Fortress Of Solitude (2019) is an exploration of various labyrinths of sound, texture, and timbre. The title comes from the comic book hero Superman's fortress of solace that is a frozen tundra away from civilization. In the comics, Superman goes to the fortress as a place to escape and for self-discovery and reflection. As a comic book nerd, I found this sanctuary to be fascinating, a space where the character could exist outside of the society around him, answer to no one, and go in-ward. I imagined a fortress of physical space and of mind where a person could explore the various labyrinths, and regions of one's own self. Each movement is contrasted against each other and linked by various thematic materials to create a thread.

– Seth Davis

Slow moving, yet full of timbral energy, **Inexplicable Profusion** presents rich sonic textures that continually morph into something new. The soprano and alto saxophones used in this work act as the sole source of material for the live electronics. In this way, the performer directly generates all of the sound heard.

The focus of the work is on micro moments of sound--the "sound within sounds", which normally pass too quickly to be perceived. Hearing these sounds is made possible using electronics. While looking through this zoomed in lens, it is easy to feel as if we've entered an entirely different sound world. There are, in a sense, two layers of perception: the saxophone, in real time, on the surface, and the electronics, which is vastly expanded and in the background.

The intersections between these two timelines seem to both coalesce and stratify from moment to moment. The sounds produced by the electronics are most often heard as a dense “wall of sound”; the performer is tasked with producing sounds that both emerge from and merge with the electronics.

Because the saxophones directly generate the electronics, the timbres of the sounds are quite similar, despite being presented in drastically different ways. The performer is asked to improvise two sections of the work, creating variability between performances. Despite moving between the extremes of a large dynamic range, the sounds are often reflective; sometimes contemplative, and sometimes brooding.

– David Landon

I can't see the "Light" (2017) is an excerpt from the experience of a protest I participated in my hometown, Hong Kong...

"The 1st of July, 1997, was the day when the political control of Hong Kong was handed over to China from England. The 1st of July is then being celebrated every year as a public holiday in Hong Kong. However, this date has also become an annual protest day since 2003, when thousands and thousands of people go onto the street to shout out the injustice they encountered in the society. As an artist, and a member of this society, I went to the protest on the 1st of July in 2016 to observe the whole event, as I believe this is my responsibility to learn about the place where I grew up from, and to witness what is happening in this city with my own eyes. The sounds, images, and emotions I experienced had haunted me so bad on my way home after the protest. I could not stop but to feel like I am stuck in this train of despair towards the hopeless and tasteless future." (April 2017)

The version presented in this concert is a reworked version created during the summer of 2019.

– **Chi Him Chik**

Blink (2019) is a concept piece constructed to illustrate people who have no experience in music. This piece has been made into a video-installation recently, while the score of the music has no notation but only a few sentences of rules.

– **Menghao Xie**

Blink (n.) - a momentary gleam of light. Inspired from the instructions of Menghao Xie's video-installation piece *Blink*, *AfterBlink* works with the relationship between the binary transitions of visuals and the continuous growth of sounds. It experiments with the human perception in correlating between visual and hearing, and challenges the audience's limit in perceiving excessive information: "What do you see? What do you hear? Do they have to relate to each other? How much can you take? How do you feel, what do you see, hear, in this moment AND afterwards?"

Warning: This performance may contain flashing lights/images that potentially trigger seizures for people with photosensitive epilepsy. Viewer discretion is advised.

– **Chi Him Chik**

Since the premiere of Ravi Kittappa's KUBA at the 2015 World Saxophone Conference, I have been fascinated by the sounds and possibilities through the use of implanted electronics in saxophone. Implanted electronics is a technique to modify electronically processed sounds with a musical instrument. By putting a speaker into the instrument and projecting sounds into it, the sounds are manipulated through the resonance and various combinations of key openings of the instrument. In the case of saxophone, the sound is also manipulated by the variations of the embouchure and tongue positions of the performer.

Into the SOUND was a yearlong project based on the research and imagination on the use of live electronics and implanted electronics with saxophone. The initial idea was to create a piece that is capable of using implanted electronics to flexibly show various contrasting ideas and to give a fresh and virtuosic, yet entertaining performance. The version *Into the SOUND(b)* is an extended idea to combine interactive visual elements to the piece, by visualizing the movement and energy of sounds created."

– **Chi Him Chik**