Lukas Ligeti
Transcending the boundaries of genre, composer-percussionist Lukas Ligeti has developed a musical style of his own that draws upon downtown NY experimentalism, contemporary classical music, jazz, electronica, and world music, particularly from Africa. Lukas creates music ranging from the through-composed to the free-improvised, often exploring non-Western elements, and has been participating in cultural exchange projects for the past 15 years. Lukas' music is has been released to high acclaim on two CDs on the Tzadik label as well several more on the Cantaloupe, Intuition, TUM, Wallace, and Innova labels, among others. In 2010, Lukas received the Alpert Award in the Arts in Music.

Dafna Naphtali
Dafna Naphtali is a sound-artist/ improviser/composer from an eclectic musical background. As a singer/guitarist/electronic-musician she performs and composes using her Max/MSP programming for sound processing of voice and other instruments. Dafna can be heard on Mechanique(s) (Acheulian Handaxe), on What is it Like to be a Bat? (Tzadik/ Oracles) (4 Stars, All Music Guide) with Brazelton and Danny Tunick, Her newest CD Chatter Blip with Chuck Bettis is on Acheulian Handaxe.

Lindsay Vickery
Music includes works for acoustic and electronic instruments in interactive-electronic, improvised or fully notated settings, ranging from solo pieces to opera and has been commissioned by numerous groups for concert, dance and theatre. Work draws on Collage, Fractal Structuring, Cross-Genre, Non-linearity, Score-Film, Poly-Tempo Music, Alternate Controllers, Extended Techniques, Electronics, Interactivity, Improvisation, interactive video and electronic instrument design. Founder member of the ensembles: Decibel, SQUINT, [de]CODE me, HEDKIKR, Shmil, GRIT, GrupoLipoSucto, Trans, zut, Magnetic Pig and alea new music ensemble.

Petro Vouris
Born In Athens Greece, Petro grew up in Perth with a emerging taste for Visual art & sound. With a background as a sculpture and instillation artist Petro's work moves into many genres and mediums to unravel curiosities and concepts. As a composer Petro has worked & collaborated with such artists as KK Null (Zena Geva - Japan), Ikue Mori (DNA – Japan/NY), Lindsay Vickery (W.A), Scanner AKA Robin Rimbaud (UK), Chrissie Parrott Dance Company (Aus) and Kaffe Mathews (UK). He has also had his sound instillations exhibited in the San Francisco Museum Of Modern art (SFMOMA), Artrage Festival and the Perth Institute Of Contemporary Art (PICA).

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The Mechanical Piano

The Yamaha Disklavier is the player piano of the digital age - a concert grand fitted with the latest technology allowing it to be performed remotely and to be used as a device to trigger events in a computer. There is a long association between composers writing for mechanical pianos. In particular Conlon Nancarrow created a unique repertoire for the instrument. Between 1948 and 1993 he explored an the possibilities of the instrument in nearly 40 works. This concert brings together works written especially for the Yamaha Disklavier, with and without performer. Pianist Mark Gasser brings the human touch to works by Cat Hope, Lukas Ligeti and Lindsay Vickery. Roland Adeney triggers the piano keyboard in an altogether less othodox manner. Works by Annie Gosfield and Petro Vouris rely on the expressive qualities of the Disklavier alone.

AUSTRALIA ECU UNIVERSITY EDITH COWAN

Annie Gosfield: **Bottom of the Barrelhouse** (1996) Disklavier Solo
"Bottom of the Barrelhouse" was inspired by barrelhouse pianists and the power and density that they achieved playing in barrelhouses (temporary saloons set up for loggers or turpentine workers). The pianos were often in terrible disrepair, and the music had to be heard over the wild noise of the crowd. "Bottom of the Barrelhouse" incorporates dense layers of barrelhouse and boogie woogie riffs (with a tip of the hat to Conlon Nancarrow) and adds a strong element of dissonance and big, fat, clusters. One robotic piano does the work of three strong men, and unlike the barrelhouse days, the violent tendencies remain inside the piano, and won't extend to fights in the crowd. The piece was composed in 1996 and premiered at The Extended Piano, a Disklavier Festival in NYC curated by Elliott Sharp.

Lindsay Vickery: **Reconstruction of a Shifting Path** (2011) Disklavier and Pianist
This work written for virtuoso Mark Gasser explores the possibilities of allowing the piano to be triggered and performed by a computer in addition to its traditional function as a medium for the pianist. Since Mark seems just as able to push the piano to its limits as my laptop – one of the chief roles it plays in this work is to add extra fingers (fists and forearms) for the ten fingered, two armed human performer. The work uses the piano as a trigger to generate additional material and textures to the pianist's performance and the triggering map of the keyboard is altered from section to section. The score is presented on a laptop allowing with a dynamic clicktrack allowing for the precise coordination of the evolving textures.

Roland Adeney: **Rat Run** (2011) Disklavier Solo (First Performance)
Visiting the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney last January I was tantalised by two videos by Hayden Fowler, one of them entitled 'White Australia', dated 2006. So I decided to have some fun making this piece for Disklavier, most obviously with the animation that influences some musical output, but also in making a collection of computer modules that play with pitch materials using shapes and probabilistic randomness. To perform the piece, I trigger the modules at will, adjusting dynamic range and tempo (some have fluctuating tempi within a certain range). The programming is in Pure Data, a graphical programming language similar to Max-MSP.

Lindsay Vickery: **questions written on sheets of glass** (2011) Disklavier and Bass Clarinet (First Performance)
In this work, the improvisation of solo instrumentalist are analysed in real-time by computer and then used as the basis for a piano "accompaniment". There are many variables both in the manner in which the sound is analysed and the manner in which the information is transformed into music. The computer moves unpredictably through these variables, creating a shifting kaleidoscope of textures for interaction between the soloist and the disklavier.

Lukas Ligeti: **Delta Space** (2002) Disklavier and Pianist
Delta Space was commissioned in 2002 by New York University for Kathleen Supove. In the work the pianist and the computer play the same keyboard simultaneously, fighting for space in an extremely dense musical landscape. Soon, a sampler joins in, contributing the sounds of a harp and two traditional African instruments, a balafon and a ngoni, detuned and treated in various ways. But while many of my compositions are somehow informed by my experiences in Africa, this piece quite literally takes its African influence full circle. The initial melody could be a guitar part from a Congolese "soukous"-style piece. The recording is an excerpt from Je serai la, a song in a contemporary, urban African style reminiscent of soukous which I wrote for the singer Mai Lingani from Burkina Faso - and the piano melody joins up with the guitar part from this song. A completely over-the-top yet lyrical coda, perhaps an insane kora player mutated into a computerized piano, concludes this union of experimental composition and African song.

Interval

Dafna Naphtali: **Landmine** (1999/2007) Disklavier and Pianis
Commissioned in 2000 by American Composers Forum for Kathleen Supové. The various sections of the piece are named for Unix processes that are related to the musical concepts for that section. The composition and performance of this piece rely heavily on programs I have written in Max/MSP: The piano part is based on a real-time algorithmic compositional "toy" that I developed, inspired by the music of Nancarrow and Xenakis. It was used to generate all the basic harmonic and rhythmic materials used in writing the piece. Finally, in two sections (most notably the last measures of :q! quit without saving), the pianist improvises with and against the same algorithm that was used to generate the raw material for the piano parts, as well as with a program that creates "piano for 14 hands". The title reflects the way the "toy" algorithm behaves — inserting chords and repetitions in unexpected places that could potentially overwhelm the performer.

Petro Vouris: **Bottoms Up** (2011) Disklavier Solo (First Performance)
'Bottoms Up' is a reinterpretation of Annie Gosfield's 'Bottom of the Barrelhouse" using Markov Chain probabilities based on the analysis of re-acquiring pitch relationships, rhythmic duration and velocities found in the original piece. Vouris was able to re-realize the composition by using a Markov chain analysis and processing machine made using Max MSP, that he has been working on as part of his recital work as a student of Composition at WAAPA. The compositional device Vouris has created is named after Auxesia the Greek goddess of growth, from her we get the word Auxo (Αὔξώ) which means "increaser". By using controlled probabilistic systems such as Markov Chains, AUXESIA allows simple seed's of information such as rhythm, pitch and dynamics to grow into a fully matured work able to live, mutate and continue growing until it's Composer/maker chooses to seal its fate and immortalize the work in a static form.

Cat Hope **Chunk** (2010) Disklavier and Pianist Dedicated to Mark Gasser (First Performance)
This is work that explores and compares the possibilities of the human pianist with the mechanical piano. Being interested in noise and maximal musics, I was fascinated with the possibility that the mechanical piano to play all notes at once, or in larger 'chunks' – something a person would find difficult to do without mechanical assistance of some kind. The graphic score for the work is fed through a MaxMSP 'reader' for both pianos, but the disklavier uses MIDI messages to read it's score. This piece sets human interpretation against the abilities of the machine, and is dedicated to Mark Gasser: the pianist who I think could get closest to proving humans are better.
maxMSP programming and player by Jarryd Bird.

Curated by Lindsay Vickery
Software wrangling by Sam Gillies

Mark Gasser
London-based pianist Mark Gasser is critically acclaimed for his wide repertoire of classical and contemporary music. Gasser was a founding member of the Thallein Ensemble and has performed as a soloist with leading symphony orchestras across the globe. In 2002 he was "Bösendorfer Artist of the Year". Performing over 50 concerti across four continents in leading venues including New York's Carnegie Hall, Mark has played alongside Peter Donohoe, Dmitri Alexeev, Boris Berezovsky and Nikolai Demidenko. His versatility has also seen him work with popular artists such as Pink, Jarvis Cocker and Björk. Mark Yamaha's principal concert artist in Australia.

Roland Adeney
Roland Adeney began composing with traditionally notated works for acoustic ensembles in the mid 1990s with a composers' group. His style was World-music influenced, and this was adapted for the theatre, including the middle-eastern soundscape for "A Beautiful Life" (1998, 2000), "the tale of MONKEY – his magic journey to the west", and "A Paper House" where he performed semi-improvised violin for much of the show. After 2000, Roland collaborated and performed with poets. The creative outcome from his recent PhD from QUT Creative Industries is a new interactive music performance system, the HarmonyGrid. Roland is currently a Composer in Residence at WAAPA.

Annie Gosfield
Annie Gosfield lives in New York City and divides her time between performing on piano and sampler with her own group and composing. Her work often explores the inherent beauty of non–musical sounds, and is inspired by diverse sources such as machines, destroyed pianos, warped 78 records, and detuned radios. She uses traditional notation, improvisation, and extended techniques to create a sound world that eliminates the boundaries between music and noise, while emphasizing the unique qualities of each performer. Gosfield's discography includes three solo releases on the Tzadik label and her most recent CD, "Lost Signals and Drifting Satellites" demonstrates her approach to contemporary classical music.

Dr Cat Hope
Cat Hope is a multidisciplinary artist based in Western Australia whose work is grounded in sound. Trained as a classical flautist she later moved to bass playing, noise, improvisation, rock, video art and installation and is currently the CREATEC Post Doctoral Research Fellow at WAAPA, ECU. She is a passionate performer and researcher with an active international publication and touring schedule, as a soloist, academic and in her groups Abe Sada, Decibel and sound art collective Metaphonica. Her research interests include low frequency sound, film music, WA new music archiving and the relationship between acoustic and electronic instruments.

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online e-dition jan 31, 2012

man-machine music

sam gillies: the mechanical piano, waapa

Mark Gasser performing Cat Hope's Chunk, The Mechanical Piano
photo courtesy the artists

THE YAMAHA DISKLAVIER IS BILLED AS THE PLAYER PIANO OF THE DIGITAL AGE. IT LOOKS AND SOUNDS EXACTLY LIKE A TRADITIONAL GRAND PIANO BUT CAN ALSO SEND AND RECEIVE MIDI MESSAGES. THIS ALLOWS FOR A MORE INVOLVED MUSICAL WORKOUT THAN IS POSSIBLE FROM A HUMAN PERFORMER, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE MECHANICAL PIANO PROGRAM CURATED BY LINDSAY VICKERY AT THE WEST AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS.

The concert featured a range of approaches to writing for this unique instrument. The most basic of these was the direct playback of a MIDI file by the Disklavier as evidenced in program opener Annie Gosfield's Bottom of the Barrelhouse. Inspired by barrelhouse pianists, the piece combines dense layers of barrelhouse and boogie-woogie riffs. Collage pieces such as this always prove to be engaging as the listener tries to identify the component motifs. While the overall dynamic range of the piece was perhaps one-dimensional, it suited the thematic context of the composition.

Mark Gasser took to the stage to add a human element to the proceedings, performing Lindsay Vickery's Reconstruction of a Shifting Path, premiered at Piano Tapestries as part of the Totally Huge New Music Festival in September last year (see review). In this piece the Disklavier reacts to music performed by the pianist with certain key presses triggering a variety of musical motifs that effectively give the performer extra limbs. The interplay between man and machine results in cascades of notes rippling across the piano keyboard like water drops and high speed trills running up the keys in strange arpeggiated patterns. It effectively creates a fascinating visual aesthetic to accompany some beautiful music.

Roland Adeney contributed an audio-visual composition entitled Rat Run. Projecting onto the floor from a ladder, Adeney triggers various video 'modules' eliciting a reaction in the Disklavier based on shape and probability-based randomness. The music itself was enjoyable with its one-dimensional language, but the 8-bit visuals were possibly distracting.

Lindsay Vickery's second contribution to the program, Questions Written on Sheets of Glass, was an improvisation between bass clarinet and piano. Using live computer processing Vickery is able to extract harmonic material from his bass clarinet performance and arrange this as notes on the Disklavier keyboard. The resulting performance created a kaleidoscopic texture with bass clarinet and piano in dynamic interplay.

The first half closed with a performance of Lukas Ligeti's Delta Space, again featuring Mark Gasser competing with the Disklavier for space in a dense musical landscape. Delta Space was the closest thing to a pop song on the program, featuring a discernible melody amid contemporary urban rhythms disguising the underlying complexity of the music.

Dafna Naphtali's Landmine set the tone for a noisier second half. The piano material was created with the aid of the composer's own algorithmic programs in a performance that fused acoustic piano with electro-acoustic sampling and manipulation. Despite some initial struggles balancing the sound of laptop processing with the Disklavier, the result was a busy fusion of rich textures that made this one of the most inspired pieces on the program.

Petro Vouris, a student at WAAPA, has recently been investigating ways of using Markov chain probabilities [a mathematical system regarding transitions from one state to another] to rework the relationships between pitch intervals, rhythmic duration and dynamics of a given composition. For this performance Vouris reworked Annie Gosfield's Bottom of the Barrelhouse creating a new work entitled Bottoms Up. As with the earlier Gosfield work the Disklavier was used to play back a pre-existing MIDI file, but there was no clearly discernible relationship between Vouris's work and the original. Nonetheless it was an interesting example of how to create a new work utilising an original compositional approach.

The final piece on the program was the premiere of Cat Hope's Chunk for Disklavier and pianist. Hope utilises the laptop to create a literal translation of her graphic score as piano notes on the Disklavier while pianist Mark Gasser interprets from his own score on a separate piano. The result was one of the loudest acoustic pieces I've heard in recent times and effectively pushed both man and machine to their limits, bringing the evening to a close in true rock and roll spirit.

The Mechanical Piano: curator/bass clarinet/laptop Lindsay Vickery, piano Mark Gasser, laptop Roland Adeney; Music Auditorium, West Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Oct 27, 2011

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