



DMA Recital III

Matti Pulkki, Accordion

Wesley Shen, piano & shō
Michael Murphy, shō
Sarah Albu, voice

May 23, 2023
Walter Hall

PROGRAMME

Erz (2006-2007) Jukka Tiensuu
(1948-)
Heat, Desire, Effort, Shadow, Sway, Forwards!

Partita in B-Flat Major, BWV 825 J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)
Praeludium, Allemande, Corrente, Sarabande, Menuet I & II, Gigue

INTERMISSION

Bagatellen, for piano and accordion (1994) Uroš Rojko
(1954-)
I & II

Seeping, for two shōs and accordion (2023) Michele Foresi
(1988-)

Tre tangos till texter av Gunnar Ekelöf (2000) Maja SK Ratkje & Frode Haltli
(1973- & 1975-)
Hemliga Tecken, Fanfar, Då dagen var slut

This recital is in partial fulfilment of the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance.

Matti Pulkki is a student of Joseph Macerollo.

Matti Pulkki performs frequently with different ensembles and as a soloist around the world. Although often focusing on classical contemporary repertoire and collaborating with composers, Pulkki also arranges, transcribes, and performs music from a wide range of styles and genres, and frequently works on diverse projects from interdisciplinary productions to music theatre and opera. His currently active chamber music projects include an eclectic voice and accordion duo Sawtooth with Montreal-based vocalist Sarah Albu, classical-contemporary Freesound Performance Collective in Toronto, and internationally acclaimed classical crossover ensemble Quartetto Gelato. Pulkki holds a Master's degree from the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki.

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

DMA III
Matti Pulkki – Accordion

In my third and final DMA recital I examine tradition, connotation, and rediscovery. The program is divided into two parts. In the first half of the program I look back at repertoire that has served as inspiration, challenge, and even as an authority for me in the past. In the second half I look forwards through my most recent collaborations.

Erz, German for ore, is a collection of 14 miniatures composed by Finnish composer Jukka Tiensuu. Commissioned by Denis Patkovic and written in 2006-2007, *Erz* is written as a “counterpiece” for J.S. Bach’s *Goldberg Variations*, and each miniature is composed to fit between specific variations. The piece can also be performed as an independent cycle, or freely chosen collection of miniatures, as heard in today’s recital. In *Erz*, Tiensuu plays with multiple levels of tradition: historical references and the obvious connection to the *Goldberg* (and the classical accordionists’ historical interest towards performing J.S. Bach’s music), global folk music traditions, and the traditional virtuosity in the practice of accordion playing. The selected miniatures form a contrasting, yet uniform set, introducing elements such as eerie microtonal clusters, Balkan grooves, temperamental gusts, and piercing accents. *Erz* has been one of my the earliest introductions to contemporary avant-garde accordion repertoire, and I have rediscovered this piece multiple time over the years, always impressed by its idiomaticity, humor, and range of expression regarding both performance techniques and sonorities.

Partita in B-Major appears as the first one in the collection of J.S. Bach’s six keyboard partitas catalogued under BWV 825-830. *Partitas* follow Bach’s two earlier sets of keyboard suites in sequential dance-movement structure, *French* and *English Suites*, and are considered structurally more free-ranging compared to the two. To me, the first *Partita* evokes feelings of nostalgia, hopefulness, and sparkling joy. The piece does not open with a bang, but with a rather sweet, serene, little prelude, and continues to swirl in layers, and mold characters as the piece advances. My interpretation explores especially the spectrum of soft dynamics and variety of articulations.

Uros Rojko on *Bagatellen*:

”I believe communication is an essential for relationships among people as for forms of artistic expression. The more intense and subtle communication is, the more expansive and profound understanding, sympathy and togetherness among those who interact. In its ideal form, communication will lead to a perfect identification and osmosis. *Bagatellen* for accordion and piano are a “study” in communication, based on the inherent contrast between both instruments.”

Bagatellen is composed in 1994 for pianist Mika Yamada and accordionist Stefan Hussong. In the two first bagatelles, the instruments inhabit opposing roles, almost arguing with each other. The first movement gushes Balkan temperament and chromaticism, as each hand of each performer drifts in and out of unison. In the second movement, time stops as single note ostinato from the piano sets the stage for an exploration of color and timbre.

Michele Foresi on *seeping*:

"For as long as I can remember, I have always participated of the world mainly through my ears. I have a terrible sense of taste, I cannot stand most smells, I have no visual imagination of any kind. By default my brain converts all sorts of inputs into auditory sensations. For this reason, I have a deep love and respect for people, such as Deaf people and Hard of Hearing, who tell of having the opposite experience.

"The Daily Moth", a YouTube news channel in American Sign Language, showed an interview with an indigenous Canadian Deaf woman, Marsha Ireland of the Oneida tribe, Turtle Clan, about her experience in a residential school in Canada. In these terrible facilities, young members of marginalized communities were forced to lose their identities. One of the ways in which Marsha was punished was to lock her up in a cold, completely dark storage room except for a strip of light filtering in from under the door. The only way she had to pass the time, her anchor to reality, was to observe that strip of light.

Her testimony hit me on a very emotional lever, reminding me of something that happened in my life, and I immediately heard it in my head shaped in noise and pitches. From her hands signing, to my inner ears producing sound. I can never understand the pain of that experience, the discrimination, the repression. But I couldn't stop myself from hearing her story, and I decided to give it to other people, as it resonated with me."

Tre Tangos is a result of collaboration between Norwegian composer, sound artist and vocalist Maja SK Ratkje and accordionist Frode Haltli. The poetry of Swedish surrealist Gunnar Ekelöf is set in a cycle of tangos, where Ratkje and Haltli warp the the traditional tango and its defining features creating a dream-like, impressionistic atmosphere. It sounds like a tango, but not everything is how it should be. The piece studies the long tradition of tango playing on accordion, playing with clichés without diminishing into a caricature.

Links to artist, composers, and ensembles:

<https://sawtoothduo.ca/>

<https://www.freesoundmusic.ca/>

<https://www.sarahalbu.com/>

<http://www.micheleforesi.it/>

<https://murphy-percussion.com/>

<https://mattipulkki.com/>

Tre tangos till texter av Gunnar Ekelöf

<p>Hemliga tecken</p> <p>Hennes mun är de ljummaste vindarnas källa och rösten ett valv som ekar av fågelstrupar</p> <p>Hennes björkögon glittrar hennes lind-öron susar vid sommarens sjöar</p> <p>I solnedgången spelar han över forsarnas silver strängar med vansinnets alla stråkar av myggor och syrsor solnedgången är en sång av honom</p> <p>Hennes tankar är myror som vandrar fram över de vita molnen och molnen är hennes lugna flyktiga känslor</p> <p>Omgiven av vindar och ekon griper han vattnets klanger ur regnbågens harpa och slår på månens trolltrumma sirad med hans hemliga tecken</p>	<p>Secret signs</p> <p>Her mouth is the source of the warmest winds and her voice is a vault echoing with birds</p> <p>Her birch eyes glisten Her linden ears whisper by the lakes of summer</p> <p>At sunset he plays over the silver strands of the rapids With all the strings of madness Of mosquitoes and crickets The sunset is a song of his</p> <p>Her thoughts are ants Wandering over the white clouds And the clouds are her calm escape</p> <p>Surrounded by winds and echoes he grasps the sounds of water From the rainbow harp and strikes on the moon's magic drum Seared with his secret sign</p>
<p>Fanfar</p> <p>skär upp magen skär upp magen och tänk inte på morgondagen skär upp magen det är din egen invärtes sorglighet som går åt helvete</p> <p>låt altaret bli vattenklosett låt pekfingret mjukna allting att glömma och ingenting att minnas i drömmen mellan detta liv och nästa</p> <p>skär upp magen i dag är vi glada som sjungande ljus och klingande glas skär upp magen och prisar gud för 30 dagar</p>	<p>Fanfare</p> <p>cut up your stomach cut up your stomach and don't think about tomorrow cut up your stomach It's your own inner sadness that goes to hell</p> <p>Let the altar become a water closet let your index finger soften all to forget and nothing to remember in the dream between this life and the next</p> <p>cut open your stomach today we are happy as singing candles and tinkling glasses Cutting open your stomach and praise God for 30 days</p>

<p>kvar i detta helvete skär upp magen skär upp magen och tänk inte på morgondagen</p>	<p>left in this hell Cut open your stomach cut open your stomach and don't think about tomorrow</p>
<p>Då dagen var slut</p> <p>Då dagen var slut och tystnaden vilade över världen</p> <p>kom du till mig gående genom skymningen</p> <p>O du som släcker mitt hjärtas lågor som stillar dess febertörst och botar dess obotliga sjukdom</p> <p>Ja såg dina fot spår i dammet Jag rullade mina kinder i stoftet efter dig Jag tryckte mitt bröst mot sanden där du gått två kupor som märke</p> <p>O du som släcker mitt hjärtas lågor som stillar dess febertörst och botar dess obotliga sjukdom</p> <p>I längtan formar sig strandens otaliga sandkorn</p> <p>till vågor under det omätliga havets böljslag</p>	<p>At the end of the day</p> <p>When the day was done and the silence rested over the world</p> <p>you came to me walking through the twilight</p> <p>O you who kindles the flames of my heart who quenches its feverish thirst and heals its incurable disease</p> <p>I saw your footprints in the dust I rolled my cheeks in the dust after you I pressed my chest against the sand where you walked Two domes like a mark</p> <p>O you who kindles the flames of my heart who quenches its feverish thirst and cures its incurable disease</p> <p>In longing the countless grains of sand on the shore</p> <p>into waves beneath the surging of the immeasurable sea</p>