

University of
Lethbridge



Faculty of Fine Arts
Department of Music

Presents

Isaiah Chadney, trumpet

In a

Graduation Recital

Assisted by

Bente Hansen, piano

Noah Robertson, piano

Sarah Wigglesworth, percussion

Juan Añez, electronics

From the Studio of

Dr. Josh Davies

7:30PM

March 11, 2023

Recital Hall

~~ **PROGRAM** ~~

Centennial Horizon

Aspen Grove

Alpenglow

Roaring Gunnison

Kevin McKee

(b. 1980)

Bente Hansen, Piano

Circadian Rhythm

Justin Rito

(b. 1986)

Bente Hansen, Piano

~~ **INTERMISSION** ~~

Now I Am Become Death

Michael Cotten

(b. 1994)

Cassini

Final Pass

Into the black...

Plunge

Kevin Poelking

(b. 1988)

Noah Robertson, piano
Sarah Wigglesworth, percussion

~~ PROGRAM NOTES ~~

Centennial Horizon was commissioned by Albany trumpeter Catherine Sheridan. With two contrasting movements (*Aspen Grove* and *Roaring Gunnison*) connected by an interlude (*Alpenglow*), Kevin McKee captures some of the beauty and adventure of Colorado (the "Centennial State"). Inspired by McKee's late grandmothers love of that state, the first movement is an homage to her.

Circadian rhythms are incredible biological cycles that happen every 24 hours. They are often associated with meal times and sleep for humans, but have also been observed in an amazingly diverse number of species, including everything from the leaf behavior of some plants to the migration patterns of butterflies. Although they are often biologically engrained rather than learned, these cycles can be altered through environmental changes over time. The piece *Circadian Rhythm* begins and ends with similar music—the way a biological cycle might operate in the background of our lives—yet explores several different styles in between. As the opening returns toward the end, however, it has changed, suggesting a slowly learned transformation.

In 1965, J. Robert Oppenheimer gave a televised interview which would go on to live in infamy. Reflecting on seeing the first atomic bomb successfully detonate, he said: "We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried. Most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita; Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty and, to impress him, takes on his multi-armed form and says, 'Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.' I suppose we all thought that, one way or another"

Now I Am Become Death explores the emotions felt by Oppenheimer and the world created in the wake of the atomic bomb. The composition doesn't seek to pass judgement on atomic weapons, rather to explore what a human would feel knowing they have forever shifted the paradigm of humanity forever.

There are multiple motifs present throughout *Now I Am Become Death*. The first is the constant ticking of a clock. This clock represents the doomsday clock which was started in 1947 in response to the use of nuclear weapons. The ticking is ever present and at times is amplified to feel pressing on the listener. In addition to this is the use of sampled audio from various sources. The 1965 Oppenheimer interview is weaved throughout the entire composition. This interview is chopped up rhythmically at times, appearing only in small bursts; at others it is distorted to take on a malevolent feel; and at the apex of the composition, the interview is allowed to play in its entirety without interruption. Beyond Oppenheimer, the composition features sampled audio from former presidents Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy, Barack Obama, and Donald J. Trump, along with a few other sources such as a nuclear bomb drill PSA.

To add a feeling of unease. There is a subtle frequency of 18hz present throughout the piece, emitted by a clean sine wave. From a paper titled "Mechanical Resonant Frequency of the Human Eye in Vivo", this is claimed to be roughly the frequency at which a human eyeball sympathetically vibrates. Thus, creating a subconscious pressure and sense of unease on the listener.

Cassini was commissioned by Dr. Stanley Curtis for his recording project commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Apollo moon landing. All the pieces on this CD are inspired by space, its exploration, and our human understanding of it. The piece *Cassini* is written in three movements, each representing a stage of the spacecraft's final elliptical orbit of Saturn.

Movement I: Final pass

The first movement begins in the icy, cold void of space. As *Cassini* floats along, capturing its final views of the gas giant, there are moments of peace, nobility, and beauty. Yet the mood is overall somber and uneasy, for the journey will ultimately end in death.

Movement II: Into the black...

As *Cassini* moves to the outer reaches of the elliptical orbit (the apoapsis), the vast loneliness of space is represented with musical colors, extended techniques, and the blurring of time. The steady pulse of the vibraphone represents the faint view of the sun, inspired by NASA's recording of "sun sonification." The consistent, pulsating drone fades away, representing the increasing isolation from the sun. As *Cassini* takes a turn back towards Saturn, it begins to gain speed...

Movement III: Plunge

The opening of the final movement of the piece represents the sound of radio emissions from Saturn, collected by NASA on the *Cassini* mission.** The steady pulse and quickly ascending and descending "lines" can be heard in the trumpet, with low "thumps" in the piano, while quick, sweeping glissandi sound from the glockenspiel. After experiencing the excitement, intensity, and eeriness of the planet, its rings, and the surrounding moons, the journey ends with the crushing pressure of Saturn's atmosphere as *Cassini* plunges towards the surface.