



UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON

SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE



Upcoming Music Today Festival concerts:

Saturday, April 29, 8:00 p.m. (Aasen-Hull Hall)

Ova Novi

Friday, May 5, 8:00 p.m. (Aasen-Hull Hall)

TaiHei Ensemble

Saturday, May 6, 8:00 p.m. (Aasen-Hull Hall)

ECCE

Sunday, May 7, 8:00 p.m. (Aasen-Hull Hall)

Estelí Gomez, soprano: Music by UO Composers

Wednesday May 10, 8:00 p.m. (Aasen-Hull Hall)

James Shields, clarinet with Oregon Composers Forum

Music of the Forest

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Aasen-Hull Hall
Saturday, April 22, 2017 8p.m.



Aurorean Path

Michael Fleming

- I. Like Levitating Mist* (b.1993)
II. Gentle, colorful
III. Serene
IV. Reflective

Michael Fleming, violin
 Luke Smith, steel tongue drum

I Walk Through the Trees

Brent Lawrence

(b.1991)

Ashleigh Sizemore, soprano
 Luke Smith, marimba
 Brent Lawrence, guitar

Place You Can No

Susanna Payne-Passmore

Longer Go

(b.1990)

- IV. Mycelial Networks*

Susanna Payne-Passmore
 and Emily Korzeniewski, piano

~ **1881** first publishing of any part of Thoreau's Journal

~ **1889** Incorporated "Eugene City" (once called Skinner's Mudhole) has its name shortened to "Eugene"

~ **February 28, 1916** Thoreau's life is ended by tuberculosis; Eugene population rises to ~10,000

~ **1948** Blue River Experimental Forest is established

~ **1953** Blue River Experimental Forest is renamed H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest in honor of Horace Justin Andrews, a critical exponent of using the Forest to address problems of Northwest forestry

~ **1976** The Forest is designated a Biosphere Reserve as part

~ **1980** The Forest becomes a charter member of the National Science Foundation's Long-Term Ecological Research Program

~ **2003** The 200-year Long-Term Ecological Reflections Program begins, rooted in the belief that storytelling and poetry, observation and experiment, myth and mathematics are all authentic windows on the world

- ~ **October 22, 1837** David Henry Thoreau (now calling himself Henry David) records the first entry of his journal

“What are you doing now?” he [Ralph Waldo Emerson] asked. “Do you keep a journal?” So I make my first entry today.

- ~ **July 4, 1845** Thoreau moves into the Walden Pond cabin he’d built for himself on his friend R. W. Emerson’s land near Concord, Massachusetts. He will remain in the Walden Pond wilderness until September 6 of the same year

- ~ **October 1846** Eugene Franklin Skinner erects the first cabin on what is known today as Skinner’s Butte in Eugene, Oregon; Eugene will become the largest city in travelling distance of the H.J. Andrews Forest

- ~ **January 8, 1850** Skinner’s cabin is registered as official post office of the settlement called “Skinner’s Mudhole”

- ~ **1851—1852** The text which makes up the narration of *At Home Here* consists of journal entries from this year in Thoreau’s life

- ~ **November 3, 1861** Thoreau records the final entry of his Journal

- ~ **1876** the University of Oregon opens not far from Skinner’s Butte

**three ruminations beneath a
forgotten canopy concerning the
inevitability of conflict and oblivion**

Nikolai Valov
(b.1993)

Jeffrey Chapman, alto flute
Stephen Medlar, tam-tams
Thomas Wagenet, guitar
Kasey Calebaugh, viola
Aaron Green, bass
Nikolai Valov, conductor

Brief Intermission

At Home Here

Luke Smith
(b.1994)

Alexis Evers, flute
Michael Fleming, improviser
Andy Gheorghiu, improviser
Nikolai Valov, improviser
Stephen Medlar, improviser
Anne Polyakov, improviser
Brent Lawrence, improviser
Susanna Payne-Passmore, improviser
Ben Larson, narrator
Luke Smith, conductor

On the Program

Music of the Forest came to be when a group of composers from the Oregon Composers Forum visited the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest in November of 2016. Located near Blue River, Oregon, this site is a world renowned center for research and education about the ecology and management of forests and streams. The Experimental Forest is on the western slope of the Cascade Range of Oregon, occupying the 15,800-acre drainage basin of Lookout Creek, a tributary of Blue River and the McKenzie River. Broadly representative of the rugged, mountainous landscape of the Pacific Northwest, it features excellent examples of west-slope conifer forests and steep, fast-flowing streams.

Before timber cutting began in 1950, about 65 percent of the Experimental Forest was cloaked in old-growth forests with towering, 400-plus-year-old Douglas firs. Clearcutting and shelterwood cuttings over about 30 percent of the Experimental Forest have created young plantation forests varying in composition, stocking level, and age. The wide range of habitats supports a diverse flora and fauna. About 500 vascular plant species are found in the Experimental Forest. Vertebrate species include northern spotted owl, pileated woodpecker, osprey, black bear, bobcat, mountain lion, coyote, black-tailed deer, and Roosevelt elk. Invertebrate species total more than 3,000.

In choosing the sounds which would accompany the narration, I imagined Thoreau's journal as a swirling-together of his daily thoughts and observations. So, I chose to guide the improvisers through sounds imagined to be part of his day-to-day surroundings: sounds coming from nature and sounds coming from the buildings he would pass by. I composed this piece with the mentality that I should engage the sounds and words sensitively and with purpose. The purpose I have found is to inspire those who experience this piece to act on their own freedom and inspiration and to find a tighter connection with Earth and its inhabitants.

At Home Here - Luke Smith

When I learned that we were going to be taking a field trip to see the Andrews Forest, I wasted no time in making a plan. I typed up a list of tasks to complete while I was in the Forest (measurements of tree circumferences with relevant photographs of the sites they were chosen from), and I packed my camera and measuring tape. We were told that the Andrews is an experimental forest, and so I was determined to produce a musical experiment of my own. I returned with a full page of measurements and with the intention of transmuting them into musical events; I couldn't wait to make another plan. But the Andrews Forest posed a problem. It is a mystifying place, and not only in its beauty. Its age and vibrancy of life is bewildering and difficult to grasp without a direct encounter (statistics could help). In the end, I abandoned my project because the greatest impression left on me from our trip to the Andrews Forest was the experience of being there and not any particular relationship of ideas I had in reflection on the Forest.

Around the time of our first trip to the Andrews, I began reading the Journal of Henry David Thoreau. As I reflected on the experience of being in the Forest, I was compelled to ground my composition in his writing. His language is beautiful, and I love the music it creates when it is heard. Witnessing his daily interactions with nature was, to me, something like remembering the hike through the Andrews with my composer friends. It was my desire to reunite those who were on that trip in a musical way, using this text as the organizing agent. This is how *At Home Here* came about as a piece for narrator and guided ensemble improvisation.

Early research in the Experimental Forest centered on road engineering, logging methods for old-growth forests, and rapid forest regeneration. Since then, research conducted in the Experimental Forest has focused on conservation and careful management of old-growth sites. One such study of the northern spotted owl took place here in the latter half of the 20th century, which revealed that owl habitats in this region have been lost or disturbed by the patterns and techniques of timber harvesting used since WWII. The information from this study led the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to list the owl as "threatened" in 1990, and sparked a national controversy over the management of ecologically and economically valuable forests. Since then, the U.S. government has dramatically changed the policies governing federally-managed forests in this region by developing the Northwest Forest Plan. This plan set forth new guidelines for public lands subject to timber harvest, many of which were derived from the results of the spotted owl studies.

Currently, more than 100 research projects are underway at the Forest each year. The centerpiece of this research is Long-Term Ecological Research, a diverse series of studies characterized by data collection over the course of many years to many decades. In 2003, the Andrews Experimental Forest began a project called Long-Term Ecological Reflections, destined to continue until the year 2203. In collaboration with the Long-Term Ecological Research program, this project hosts writers, poets, musicians, and painters in the Forest. These individuals come to the Forest to create an ongoing record of their reflections on the relation of people and forests changing together over time.

Inspired by Long-Term Ecological Reflections, Justin Ralls- a Visiting Musician to the Forest and a member of Oregon Composers Forum- brought to the composers on this evening's program the idea of a concert dedicated to the work being done at the Experimental Forest. This resulted in the pieces on tonight's program.

Aurorean Path - Michael Fleming

My piece Aurorean Path is inspired by the stunning imagery of vegetation and mist covered paths of the H.J. Andrews forest. While listening to the rain fall on the leaves and moss beside me, I heard the delicate and sonorous timbre of the steel-tongue drum sonically characterizing the floating mist. Each of the four miniatures for steel-tongue drum and violin is a reaction to the way light created beautiful patterns over the incredibly ecologically diverse forest floor.

I Walk Through the Trees - Brent Lawrence

Like several of my colleagues, I was inspired by our visit to the site in the Andrews Forest where log decomposition was being studied. As I walked around, it struck me that much of the terrain was comprised of fallen trees that had been reincorporated into the earth. This cycle of nature inspired the poetry for this song. Further, I chose to employ a cascading delay effect in the electric guitar so that its material lingers once it has been played.

Place You Can No Longer Go - Susanna Payne-Passmore

This piece is the fourth movement in a piano duet exploring "other worlds" through extended techniques and new tonal constructs. The impetus for this movement was a series of photos I took of mushrooms in the H. J. Andrews Experimental Forest. I was in part fascinated by their strange geometry and in part fascinated by the reciprocal symmetry in the lifecycles of fungi and animals like ourselves. To us, mushrooms may symbolize death, danger, or slow demise, but we animals are also the frequent cause of demise for them. Fungi represent the opposite side of the cycle that keeps an ecosystem balanced and healthy. This piece uses a tonal construct that is both strange and familiar to explore that relationship.

three ruminations beneath a forgotten canopy concerning the inevitability of conflict and oblivion - Nikolai Valov

In September 2016, it was announced that global atmospheric carbon levels had passed a milestone and would be unlikely to fall below 400ppm in the foreseeable future. It is one of the many milestones of environmental destruction on humanity's record during our inconceivably short existence during Earth's timeline. As I walked through the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest, I reflected on the amount of damage we as a species have caused to the woodlands of the world and contemplated the very real-seeming possibility that we have set the Earth on an invariable course of oblivion through our actions. In this piece, composed for the 2017 Music Today Festival's Music of the Forest Concert, I attempted to represent these thoughts through a musical journey across abstract textures and nuances. Reflecting my own tendency to experience music as a sequence of sonic textures in the moment as opposed to listening for structural or compositional devices, I composed this piece measure by measure, with the form being a progression through tone colors.