

TargetMargin@7

Jessie Cox: *Black as a Hack for Cyborgification*

Jessie Cox's *Black as a Hack for Cyborgification* (2020, commissioned by Pink Noise Ensemble) is an open instrumentation work bringing musicians and audience members on a sonic journey amongst planets. Each score represents a different environment – Jupiter, the sun, a star, etc. – where hand-calligraphy is intertwined with poetry and computer code, reflecting on identity, technology, and celestial bodies.

FROM THE ENSEMBLE:

Fay Victor, voice

Isabel Lepanto Gleicher, flute

Rebekah Heller, bassoon

Clara Warnaar, percussion

Nuiko Wadden, harp

Dan Lippel, guitar

Josh Modney, violin

Wendy Richman, viola

Nicholas Houfek, light design

Maciej Lewandowski, audio

ABOUT JESSIE COX

Composer, Drummer, Scholar

One of the world's most brazenly experimental composers, Swiss artist Jessie Cox makes music about the universe - and our future in it. Through avant-garde classical, experimental jazz, and sound art, he has devised his own strand of musical science fiction, one that asks where we go next. For the last decade, his music has been marked by its freeness; his embrace of otherness has led to a body of work described by the LA Times as 'some of the most experimental music, not just of the day, but the season'. Cox's music goes forward. When he describes it, he compares it to time travel and space exploration, likening the role of a composer to that of a rocket ship traversing undiscovered galaxies. He is influenced by a vast array of artists who have used their music to imagine futures, and takes Afrofuturism as a core inspiration, asking questions about existence, and the ways we make spaces habitable. (Bio by Robin Smith).

Black as a Hack for Cyborgification

What does it mean to train a neural network? What does it mean to hack a system that is not meant for you? This piece is a neural network, we could hear the music as it is being trained, or as it is generating an output. What then are the parameters we are training and outputting when we listen and perform this work? I hope to have every individual ask themselves this question as a question of who we're making this world for, who can be someone, who can breathe in these spaces!

In this piece, we travel the spaceways. Each individual moves from one planet to another in different ways and speeds. Telecommunicating across them we can hear a music emerge... Neural Networks train through reading so much data, coming from all over the cosmos... On the one hand, this rids the spaces of their meaning... On the other, this allows for portals. Portal sound coming from small devices on stage moves you faster than the speed of light into another space... But what does this do to spaces and yourselves? Scenes of free movement and abduction are hidden beneath this network, this world... Hidden yet it has effects.



Its effects move beyond itself, its effects are before it. In Neural Networks cause and effect are not linear, as it is effects that start causes...

Every time you hear a bell something is changed. A new space appears through the reworkings instantiated by the bell. New possibilities, but they move us out of this world... This network cannot hold, cannot even hear what happens after the bells... Alter-destiny is what we hear outwards out from sound—it's music. (Written by Jessie Cox).

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The rehearsal facilities, office space, and digital servers of the International Contemporary Ensemble, sit within the Lenapehoking, or "The Land of the Lenape." We honor and acknowledge their elders present and past. Today the Lenape Diaspora is dispersed throughout the U.S. and Canada. The Lenape diaspora includes five federally recognized nations in Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and Ontario, Canada. The International Contemporary Ensemble is beginning to deepen its knowledge and understanding of our complicity in the many legacies of genocide, forced displacement, and systemic oppression. We acknowledge the direct role that we play as settlers in expropriating land, colonialism, and hostile economic policies. The International Contemporary Ensemble will build platforms for humanity and expression which are inclusive and welcoming to present and future generations of indigenous artists.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE

With a commitment to cultivating a more curious and engaged society through music, the International Contemporary Ensemble – as a commissioner and performer at the highest level – amplifies creators whose work propels and challenges how music is made and experienced. The International Contemporary Ensemble strives to cultivate a mosaic musical ecosystem that honors the diversity of human experience and expression by commissioning, developing, and performing the works of living artists. The Ensemble is a collective of musicians, digital media artists, producers, and educators who are committed to creating collaborations built on equity, belonging, and cultural responsiveness. Now in its third decade, the Ensemble continues to build new digital and live collaborative environments that strengthen artist agency and musical connections around the world. www.iceorg.org.

CREDITS

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