



Mark Applebaum

Speed dating





**THREE UNLIKELY CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS** 2016 (15:56)

Mark Applebaum, rant

1. **Nestlé** (3:39)
2. **General Motors** (5:52)
3. **Halliburton** (6:25)
  
4. **SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET** 2009 (6:21)  
Eight analog synthesizers
  
5. **SPEED DATING** 2014 (14:29)  
Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players  
Eduardo Leandro, conductor
  
6. **THE PLATE OF TRANSITION NOURISHES THE CHAMELEON APPETITE**  
1992/1994 (5:17)  
Takao Hyakutome, violin
  
7. **CLICKTRACK** 2015 (14:26)  
Southern Oregon University Percussion Ensemble  
Terry Longshore, artistic director

(56:32)







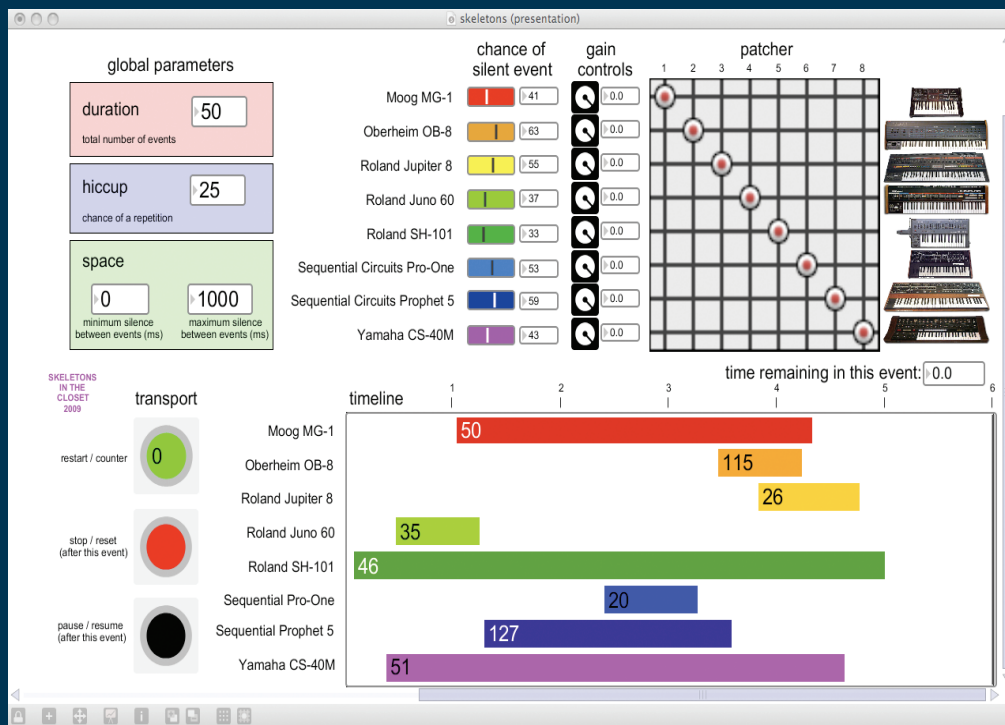




**Three Unlikely Corporate Sponsorships** is a work of sound poetry for four-channel audio, heard here in its stereo distillation. It comprises only recordings of my speaking voice, edited but otherwise unprocessed.

The piece is dedicated to composer and friend Charles Amirkhanian. It consists of three movements: *Nestlé*, *General Motors*, and *Halliburton*. These movements progress, more or less, from an emphasis on the words' raw phonetic sound to their semantic meaning (in this case, in service of a liberal social commentary). Where *Nestlé* contracts language to rudimentary aural phenomena—for example, the semantic satiation that renders *cat* (or is it *Kat*?) meaningless, or the pure auditory fascination of the words *crunch* and *shrimp* uttered simultaneously—a political screed, however inchoate and recklessly sweeping, emerges in *Halliburton*. So an approximate crossfade transpires across the three movements.

Composed in February 2016, it was provoked by the unseemly political rhetoric accompanying the U.S. presidential election primaries. During its composition I had no clue that by November the conversation would become so venal, and the outcome so hideous. Now, in my post-election state of dyspeptic fury and morbid disillusionment, I hear my playful levity and ludic naiveté with an almost wistful nostalgia.



There are skeletons in my closet—eight of them. They have names: Oberheim OB-8, Roland Jupiter 8, Roland Juno 60, Roland SH-101, Yamaha CS-40M, Moog MG-1, Sequential Circuits Prophet 5, and Sequential Circuits Pro-One. The skeletons want out. It seems that my 1980s past has finally caught up with me.

Neglected for decades and gathering dust, these classic analog synthesizers were hauled out during the summer of 2009 for the purpose of recording corresponding sample libraries. The painstakingly assembled samples (over 1,400 in total) each have a maximum duration of five seconds, and range from fleeting, iconic beeps, to irregular, idiosyncratic phrases complete with internal rhythmic complexities.

**Skeletons in the Closet** is simply a series of arbitrary ensemble explosions—polyphonic outbursts constituted by the simultaneous concatenation of all eight synthesizers. The piece is characterized by several indeterminate attributes. First, the number of outbursts is selectable for each performance, thereby producing a total duration based on event quantity. And, for every outburst, the computer randomly selects a sample within each synthesizer library, or it randomly chooses to “play” a silence. Furthermore, the rhythmic relationship among all eight synthesizers is randomized within each outburst. Likewise, the duration between outbursts is randomized. Finally, the algorithm includes a chance that a given set of eight samples will be immediately repeated, thereby creating a momentary stutter of sorts.

Designed for diffusion in up to eight channels, **Skeletons in the Closet** is heard here in stereo. It was premiered at CCRMA at Stanford University. Thanks to Michael St. Clair for his expert assistance with the Max patch.

(57)

FLUTE

CLARINET

TROMBONE

PERCUSSION

PIANO

VIOLIN

CELLO

CONTRABASS

**Speed Dating** is an octet for flute, clarinet, trombone, percussion, piano, violin, cello, and contrabass. The piece is made up exclusively of duos — instrumental couples who pair off and re-pair in a frenzied, polyamorous orgy of spasmodic rhythms, questionable “key” parties, and vocal chirrup in response to notations appearing on individual players’ custom wristwatches. Listeners can safely enjoy this hygienic mating spectacle: the love is only aural.

Composed in 2014, **Speed Dating** was commissioned by the Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players. Thanks to conductor Eduardo Leandro for his friendship and musicianship over many decades.

**The Plate of Transition Nourishes the Chameleon Appetite** for solo violin is derived from my first string quartet, **Mt. Moriah**—a monophonic stratum extracted from a polyphonic source. Both pieces are among eleven that comprise **The Janus Cycle** (1992-1994), works that embody a so-called “janus” form in which two contrasting sections are counterposed: a hectic, mercurial “kaleidoscope,” and a pensive, laconic “monolith.” In **The Plate of Transition...** two kaleidoscopes and two monoliths are available to the player, thus allowing five different formal options. This version, subtitled (83+83+), is constituted by two adjacent kaleidoscopes and one concluding monolith.

Composed in 1992, the piece was premiered by János Négyesy. A revised version (1994) was performed by Irvine Arditti at the Darmstadt Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik. For nearly two decades the piece went neglected. My sincere thanks to violinist Takao Hyakutome for championing its revival at the 2011 LABORATORIUM festival in Antwerp, Belgium.



Go softly to the Disneyland Hotel,

Its simulacral threshold grown sublime:

The bedrooms all emit that new car smell,

Like nothing else in bourgie Anaheim.

Where leftist brownies get our **MOTHERS** high,

Humanity is poorly led, forsooth—

In Eisenhower's shadow lies the lie;

In Soviet-run brothels lies the truth.

Henceforth **LET** odorous intensities

Of talkativeness, torture, filth, and death

Stiffly arouse **POSH** gilded **MELODIES**

Beethoven might have **COME** up with on **METH**

The tawdry footsteps of a bawdy Goth

Are footsteps washed in washed-up Oshkosh broth.

As its name suggests, **Clicktrack** is an unconduted work that employs click tracks in order to direct the players' rhythms. Twelve percussionists are divided into three quartets, each player following his or her own click track on headphones.

The click tracks in this piece have four noteworthy qualities: (1) They are made of recited text (as opposed to mere clicks or regular beats); (2) They are recorded in advance by the members of each ensemble (as opposed to being supplied by the composer—thereby affording unique, personalized characters); (3) They are individual to each of the three quartets; and (4) Their content is made up of recordings of each player reciting a poem, a sonnet by flarf poet K. Silem Mohammad. When various words in the poem are heard, the players execute quiet musical articulations at the corresponding moment.

The sounds tend toward the noisy: sandpaper scratches, paper crinkles, ballpoint pen clicks, tin can clunks, stone thuds, coin tinkles, duct tape tears, slide whistle sighs, bird call squeaks, glass bottle plinks, bubble wrap crackles, and the like. Sometimes more conventional percussion instruments are used, such as triangles, woodblocks, cowbells, and even music boxes. And, on occasion, the players are called upon to whisper, speak, or sing individual words from the poem.

Mohammad's sonnets—which he calls sonnagrams—are anagrams of Shakespeare sonnets. In this case, the sonnagram is a rearrangement of the letters in Shakespeare's Sonnet 3 (*Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest*). The composer gratefully acknowledges the author's generous permission to employ his text in this composition. **Clicktrack** was commissioned by the University of Wisconsin, River Falls for its 49th Annual Commissioned Composer Project, with great thanks to Patti Cudd. Thanks also to Terry Longshore and his Southern Oregon University Percussion Ensemble for their splendid recording of the piece.

**Mark Applebaum** is the Leland & Edith Smith Professor of Music at Stanford University. He received his Ph.D. in composition from the University of California at San Diego where he studied principally with Brian Ferneyhough. His solo, chamber, choral, orchestral, operatic, and electroacoustic work has been performed throughout North and South America, Europe, Africa, Australia, and Asia.

Many of his pieces are characterized by challenges to the conventional boundaries of musical ontology: works for three conductors and no players, a concerto for flautist and orchestra, pieces for instruments made of junk, notational specifications that appear on the faces of custom wristwatches, works for an invented sign language choreographed to sound, amplified Dadaist rituals, and a 72-foot long graphic score displayed in a museum and accompanied by no instructions for its interpretation. His TED Talk—about boredom—has been seen by millions of viewers.

He has received commissions from Betty Freeman, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, the Fromm Foundation, the Kronos Quartet, the Vienna Modern Festival, the Paul Dresher Ensemble, the St. Lawrence String Quartet, the Meridian Arts Ensemble, the Spoleto Festival, and numerous others. The San Francisco Con-

temporary Music Players premiered his composition *Rabbit Hole*, an elaborate chamber ensemble work based on page turns. He has also engaged in many intermedia collaborations, including neural artists, filmmakers, florists, animators, architects, choreographers, and laptop DJs.

Applebaum is also an accomplished jazz pianist who has performed from Sumatra to Ouagadougou and who concertizes internationally with his father, Bob Applebaum, in the Applebaum Jazz Piano Duo. He serves on the board of Other Minds and as a trustee of Carleton College.

Applebaum has held professorial positions at Carleton College and Mississippi State University. He has taught classes in Antwerp, Santiago, Singapore, Paris, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Finland, and Oxford. In 2000 he joined the faculty at Stanford where he directs [sic]—the Stanford Improvisation Collective, received the 2003 Walter J. Gores Award for excellence in teaching, and was named the Hazy Family University Fellow in Undergraduate Education.

[markapplebaum.com](http://markapplebaum.com)  
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### Speed Dating

The Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players  
Eduardo Leandro, conductor and artistic director  
[stonybrook.edu/commcms/music/aboutus/faculty/leandro\\_eduardo.html](http://stonybrook.edu/commcms/music/aboutus/faculty/leandro_eduardo.html)  
Recorded at the Staller Center for the Arts, Stony Brook University, 11.15.2014  
Engineered & Mixed by Eduardo Leandro

Ray Furuta, flute  
Carina Canonico, clarinet  
Justin Waller, trombone  
Mark Utley, percussion  
Anna Betka, piano  
Matheus Souza, violin  
Arnold Choi, cello  
Zach Hobin, contrabass

Commissioned by the Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players;  
thanks to Perry Goldstein.

### The Plate of Transition Nourishes the Chameleon Appetite

Takao Hyakutome, violin  
[takaohyakutome.com](http://takaohyakutome.com)  
Recorded at TR Studios, Warsaw, Poland, 4.2.2011  
Recording engineer: Tomasz Rogula

### Clicktrack

Southern Oregon University Percussion Ensemble  
Terry Longshore, artistic director  
[terrylongshore.com](http://terrylongshore.com)

#### Quartet A:

Jared Brown  
Joseph Tierney  
Lucas Sennhauser  
Darby Spence

#### Quartet B:

Greyson Boydston  
Terry Longshore  
Lindsay Burns  
Brian Taylor

#### Quartet C:

Jake Riggs  
Kevin Younker  
Nelson Cornejo  
Drew Wright

Commissioned by the University of Wisconsin, River Falls 49th Annual Commissioned Composer Project; thanks to Patti Cudd.

Recorded at BrokenWorks Productions, Ashland, OR, 12.3.16  
Engineered & Mixed by Sean McCoy,  
Oregon Sound Recording, Central Point, OR

Mark Applebaum, Terry Longshore, producers  
Jared Brown, associate producer and click track assembly  
Greyson Boydston, Drew Wright, Kevin Younker, assistant producers

Special thanks to: James Abdo, Broken-Works Productions; Jared Brown; David Humphrey, Director, Oregon Center for the Arts at Southern Oregon University; Sean McCoy, Oregon Sound Recording; Craig and Kate Muir.



Mastering: Greg Reiersen at Rareform

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