

Ashley Fure

Feed Forward, 2014

world premiere, commissioned by impuls

Consider as a problem of materiality and form the iron blocks of Donald Judd against the soft webs of Eva Hesse. While Judd favors rigid materials that take and preserve shape, Hesse's sculptures play with gravity and movement. In *Right After* (1969) supple fiberglass strands hang irregularly in space. Hesse controls select aspects of the form (the number of strands and their points of suspension), while allowing the material to bend freely with gravity toward the floor. In contrast to Judd's austere geometric constructs, Hesse strategically folds chaotic material behavior into her sculptures. If these artists present divergent approaches to form and matter (Judd imposes form on matter – Hesse invites matter to impact form), my aesthetic orientation leans heavily toward the latter. Chaotic matter and movement manifest across my creative work: sonically, through raw noise and unstable timbres, visually, through manipulated material in multimedia installations, and formally, through a gestural language infused with kinetic principles like elasticity and force.

I compose with complex timbres drawn from extended instrumental techniques and found objects such as scraped metal and bowed cardboard. Like Hesse's soft lines, these sounds are controllable only to a point. Register and gestural shape can be molded, but other aspects – the exact rhythm in a stutter or the moment one overtone breaks into another – resist precise prescription. My interest in noise is threefold. First, despite their wildness, chaotic spectra are rich with acoustic detail that can inform broader musical structures. Sonogram analyses expose a wealth of exploitable harmonic and lyric information inside even the densest of noises. Extrapolating outward from material to structure flattens the hierarchy between form and matter and invites a productive tension between chaos and control into the compositional act. Second, noises bring a visceral materiality that challenges conventional notions of musicality. Scrapes that faintly lean toward lyric lines toy with the boundary between sound as a carrier of aesthetic intent and sound as a secondary byproduct of action. Third, removing the semantics of pitch and motive puts emphasis on the live friction of sound production. Classical instrumental technique tends to deemphasize the body behind the sound: one is meant to hear the motive, not the fingernails on the keys. In my work, aberrations in placement, pressure, angle, force, and speed induce irregular limb movements that destabilize instrumental timbres and bring focus to the players' labor. These tactics produce messy, vital acoustic materials that push back against my authorial control. My work hinges on

a productive tension between the will of the maker and the will of the matter.

Feed Forward toys with the interplay of matter and form. It starts all cleanly cut: sharp edges, stark shifts, sound shoved into separate, self-contained units. Progressively, boundaries begin to break down. Things bleed through and blur. Acoustic material, once severed and sliced, stretches out and starts to morph into fused, fluid expanses that dissolve structural barriers.

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Ashley Fure (b. 1982) is an American composer of acoustic and electroacoustic concert music as well as multimedia installation art. Her work explores the kinetic source of sound, bringing focus to the muscular act of music making and the chaotic behaviors of raw acoustic matter. She holds a PhD in Music Composition from Harvard University where she worked with Chaya Czernowin and further degrees from IRCAM (Cursus 1 and 2), Oberlin Conservatory, and the Interlochen Arts Academy. Currently a Mellon Post-doctoral Fellow at Columbia University, Fure will join the Dartmouth College Department of Music as an Assistant Professor of Sonic Arts in September 2015. Winner of the 2014 Kranichsteiner Music Prize at Darmstadt, Fure also received the 2014 Busoni Prize from the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, a 2013 Fulbright Fellowship to France, a 2013 impuls International Composition Prize, a 2012 Darmstadt Stipendienpreis, a 2012 Staubach Honorarium, a 2011 Jezek Prize, and a 2011 10-month residency at Akademie Schloss Solitude. Notable recent projects include Ply, a 55-minute electroacoustic ballet commissioned by IRCAM for the 2014 Manifeste Festival in Paris; Albatross, for large ensemble and electronics, commissioned by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players for the 2014 Sweet Thunder Festival in San Francisco; and Something to Hunt, a septet commissioned for Dal Niente for the 2014 Internationalen Ferienkursen für Neue Musik in Darmstadt. Her multimedia installation Tripwire (2011), created at IRCAM with visual artist Jean-Michel Albert, has toured through multiple international festivals including The Holland Festival (Amsterdam), Bozar (Brussels), Seconde Nature (Aix-en-Provence), Elektra (Montreal), Nemo (Paris), Stereoluxe (Nantes), and L'Ososphère (Strasbourg).

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