

Collide-O-Scope Music Recordings

An Ongoing Project

Lou Bunk

Associate Professor of Music

Music Dept.

Jan. 30 2016

Project Description

1. Conception and Definition of the Project

This project is a continuation of my work with Collide-O-Scope Music, a music ensemble I co-direct with pianist Augustus Arnone: <http://www.collidemus.com/>. Our ensemble specializes in playing recently composed avant-garde classical music, and has been producing concerts and making recordings in and around New York City for the past 6 years. Last year, we received FPU research funds (2015/16) to perform and record new works of mine and others for an album release, which we are in the process of completing this spring.

Next season, we plan to continue this work and perform and record four compositions for a new album to be released in 2017. The first is a new composition of mine for violin and piano called “All the Things”. This new composition combines references from Milton Babbitt’s modernist composition “Sextet, for Violin”, and the Jazz standard “All the Things You Are” by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein. While Babbitt’s music is very different than the Kern/Hammerstein, Babbitt was famous for having a deep interest in the American Songbook, and this song in particular. 2016 is Babbitt’s centennial year, so I am writing this piece to commemorate the occasion and to show a connection between Babbitt’s music and his interest in Jazz standards. As part of this project, we will also perform and record Babbitt’s composition and the Kern/Hammerstein, to present them all back to back.

The second composition is “Three Wealth Distributions” (2015) for flute, violin, cello and piano by Elizabeth Adams, the newest member of Collide-O-Scope Music. Drawing on the long tradition of using sonic methods and structured improvisation to illuminate and express non-musical ideas, her composition explores, the implications of a bar graph by Michael Norton

and Dan Ariely, depicting the distribution of wealth in the US by quintile in three versions: as it actually is, as Americans report they think it is, and as they wish it to be. The third and fourth works are by “modern masters” that compliment these new works, thus pairing contemporary and established voices on one album. These complimentary works are a (1) a work by Robert Morris, who is influenced by non-Western music and uses structural principles from Arabic, Indian, Indonesian, Japanese, and early Western music: (2) “Sextets” for violin and piano (1966) by Milton Babbitt, who writes music inspired by mathematical constructs and the sonic diversity of electronic music; this is the composition my new work draws from.

The research funds I am requesting will pay for the cost of hiring the musicians to learn, perform and record the music, and renting a studio or hall for recording. To prepare the musicians for recording, we plan to program these works in our 2016/17 season.

For this project, my research is in three parts: (1) as a composer recording my own music, (2) as an ensemble director, curating repertoire, and working with musicians to bring the music to life, and (3) as a co-producer, bringing the music to a final recorded product. In a sense, I will be involved with all stages of bringing a piece of music to life. Throughout this project, I will work in collaboration with Augustus Arnone and Elizabeth Adams, who have both written letters of support and commitment, attached after this narrative.

This project will help meet an important professional goal of mine; to carefully record my recent music, and to release the best of these recordings to the public in an effective and artful way. In addition, there is added value by pairing my music with well-known composers, as this presents my work in the light of the best musicians in my field, perhaps setting up future collaborations.

2. Plan and Methodology

This project is part of a larger endeavor in two ways. (1) It is the second stage in a three stage artistic project. Stage one was the composing and premiere of my new work, stage two will be to record all four works, and stage three will be the release of an album featuring these works together. (2) It is part of my ongoing work with Collide-O-Scope Music; I wrote “All the Things” for this ensemble, and will work with these musicians to record and release the music; over the past four years I have written seven new compositions for Collide-O-Scope Music and helped produce ten concerts featuring this ensemble in and around New York City. We are in the process of recording and releasing many of these new works of mine.

The plan for this stage of the project is as follows: during the summer of 2016 we will decide when and where the recordings will take place. Of key importance is to schedule a recording session soon after a concert performance, so it is fresh for the players. We will likely plan two maybe three recording sessions as the pieces will be spread across our season, which runs from about October 2016 - May 2017.

The next step will be to plan the concert season, deciding which composition goes on which concert, and then scheduling the recording session accordingly. Currently we have multiple options for where to record and we may use more than one depending on the music. There is a studio in Brooklyn called “Peter Karl Studios” that has an excellent 9 ft. Steinway piano and a very good sound stage, and is close for most of our musicians. Another option is to rent a concert hall. In both cases Augustus Arnone and I will run the recording session and provide most of the equipment. Timing, availability and the music will determine where we end

up. Regardless, the recording sessions will take place between about December 2016 and May 2017.

Once we have these recordings “in the can”, we will be set up for stage three of this project which is to release them as an album; though this last stage is beyond the scope of this particular grant, I bring it up briefly here to show where this project is ultimately going. Our plan is to release the album through Augustus Arnone’s newly formed music label. We are targeting Fall/Winter 2017 as a release timeframe.

While these research funds I am requesting will cover the recording and performance of these four works, our plan is to apply for additional funds from New Music USA, the Copeland Fund, The Amphion Foundation, the Ditson Fund, among others, who all offer grants for recording and releasing new music. This past year, Collide-O-Scope Music received funds from Amphion and Ditson to help us complete our current album (the project FPU research support funded last year). Since 2009 when the group was founded, we have received funding from all the above sources, in some cases multiple times.

3. Significance of the Project

Performing and recording music brings the artistic ideas of composers and performers into the world. This in of itself is significant for all the reasons experiencing art is important and meaningful; artistic experiences change, inform and enrich people’s lives. For this particular project, those hearing my composition “All the Things” will experience a unity between disparate notions, as I merge two seemingly contrary musical styles (Modern Classical and American Songbook) by absorbing and repurposing what is in common. In Elizabeth’s composition, listeners may think about wealth distribution in a new way.

The audience for these recordings and concerts is a mix of academics and professionals who spend their life studying, composing and performing modern music, along with a healthy subculture of connoisseurs interested in avant-garde artistic expression. Over the past six years, Collide-O-Scope Music has developed a reputation for performing innovative music of extreme complexity and transcendental virtuosity, often music that many other ensembles will not program. This is our niche, and this proposed album of music will fit well into what our audience has come to enjoy and value from our artistic output.

Our expectation of this project is to bring these two new works, as well as the works of two modern masters to a wider audience, by presenting them in beautiful sounding concert halls, and ultimately through professional recordings made by the world class musicians of Collide-O-Scope Music.

Itemized Budget

- Performer Fees: Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello, Piano, Conductor (\$500 each) \$3600
- Studio Rental (\$100/hr. for 14 hrs.) \$1400

Total Budget \$5000

These performer fees are fairly standard. This will pay them for their time learning and rehearsing the music, performing it in concert and recording it in the studio. This studio rental rate is based on Peter Karl Studios mentioned in the narrative. Concert hall rentals, are similar in price.

Elizabeth Adams
219 Sackett Street #3
Brooklyn, NY 11231-3633

Faculty Development Committee
Franklin Pierce University
40 University Drive
Rindge, NH 03461-0060

Friday, January 29, 2016

Dear Members of the Faculty Development Committee,

I am so honored to have been asked to collaborate on a recording and concertizing project with Professor Lou Bunk and Collide-O-Scope Music, which I recently joined in the role of co-director. In 2012 I participated in their evening-length concert work, *Walls and Lattices*, a collaborative composition that deliberately blurred lines of authorship in fruitful ways. I have been impressed with their subsequent experiments in this direction, and I jump at the opportunity to collaborate further with them.

The work of mine Lou proposes to record, “Three Wealth Distributions,” explores related themes of autonomy and interdependence filtered through a lens of economic inequality. Based on a graph by Michael Norton and Dan Ariely, the piece translates economic inequality into duration, density, and choice. The graph and the piece deal with inequality by quintile in three versions: the actual distribution of wealth in the US in 2011, what Americans report thinking it is, and what they wish it were.

This kind of thought experiment can be rendered more real through the lived experience of analytical listening, which a recording makes a more material possibility than a first hearing at a live concert may ever produce. Concert performances, on the hand, make it possible to engage and interact with an audience and give works a more nuanced and complex social life. Developing new concert formats to further engage NYC audiences is a project I am eager to take up with Collide-O-Scope, along side the grant writing necessary to fund our work.

Collide-O-Scope’s virtuosity, its commensurate experience with the avant guard, and its commitment to experiment, make it the ideal ensemble to perform and record this piece. I am so humbled to have my work in the company of Lou’s, and that of

Christopher Bailey, Michael Klingbeil, Michael Finnissy, and Charles Wuorinen. That Lou's work is simultaneously so idiosyncratic and so responsive to the work of others, makes him an extraordinary collaborator. The opportunity to record and release these works will strengthen the ensemble's already sterling reputation, develop its audience, and grow its capacities to collaborate further.

Sincerely yours,

Elizabeth Adams
Adjunct Assistant Professor
Department of Music
Columbia University
ea206@columbia.edu
646 287 6498

Bio:

Composer, teacher, organizer, and actor, Elizabeth Adams works at the intersection of art, education, and social change. Her compositions use sound to invoke social and political metaphors, and have been performed throughout Europe and all around New York City. With Lou Bunk and Augustus Arnone, she co-directs the acclaimed new music ensemble, Collide-O-Scope Music. With the Orfeo Duo, she runs Songlines, a collaborative public mapping of a neighborhood through song-writing and performance. With Julie Harting, she produces Julie & Elizabeth's Anti-Capitalist Concert Series as occasions to bring musical affect to our political concerns, and invite musicians and audiences to reimagine their relations of production. As an actor, she co-stars with Brook Celeste in Susan Parenti's play, *Unrequited*, which depicts capitalism and socialism as co-dependent lovers. With the Free University NYC, she has helped organize 20 pop-up universities in public spaces on topics ranging from decolonizing climate justice, to resisting mass incarceration, to Kara Walker's piece *A Subtlety*. Free University's events simultaneously manifest direct action, free public education, and movement-building. Having recently earned her doctorate in composition from the CUNY Graduate Center, she currently teaches music theory at Columbia University as an adjunct. In the past she has taught at Baruch College, and given guest lectures at The New School, Bard College, The Evergreen State College, and Universidad Iberoamericano. She joined the School for Designing a Society as a student in 2005, and as a teacher in 2010. She holds other degrees in English, Music, Composition, and Musiktheater from Barnard, Stony Brook, and the Hochschule der Kunste, Bern. You can hear her compositions at soundcloud.com/elizabethadamscomposes, and on the Indexical label.

Augustus Arnone
4600 Belmar Blvd.
Neptune, NJ 07753
augustus.arnone@gmail.com
Artist Faculty, New York University

January 29, 2016

To the Franklin Pierce Faculty Development Committee,

I'm writing this letter to confirm my intent to co-produce a music CD with Lou Bunk featuring Collide-O-Scope Music, the new music ensemble that together we co-direct. The album will include a new work by Mr. Bunk entitled *All The Things* for violin and piano as well as other works written for our group by Elizabeth Adams, Milton Babbitt and Robert Morris.

This album will be the second planned release featuring Collide-O-Scope Music, which is now in its seventh season. Both these recordings will further develop the impact and presence of our ensemble, and of the repertoire which we have been building through commissions.

The album will be released on a new recording label to be launched by myself in the coming year. The recordings will be distributed in both physical and digital formats. I am enclosing an artist biography, as well.

Regards, Augustus Arnone

Augustus Arnone – Artist Biography

Augustus Arnone is an adventurous pianist who has made a home at the edge of transcendental extremes in the modern repertory. His repertoire includes the complete works for solo piano by Milton Babbitt and Michael Finnissy's complete monumental eleven movement piano cycle, "The History Of Photography In Sound," as well as works by Cage, Xenakis, Stockhausen, Rzewski, Carter, Nono, Lucier, Feldman, Martino, Rakowski, Sierra, Champion and Eckardt. Composers who have written for him include Christopher Bailey, Yotam Haber, Michael Klingbeil, Aaron Brooks, James Romig, Lou Bunk, Spencer Topel, and Todd Tarantino. A stalwart champion of the ever-controversial Babbitt, Mr. Arnone performed the composer's complete solo piano music over the course of two evenings at Merkin Concert Hall. Mr. Arnone has been presented at venues throughout Manhattan and Brooklyn including Merkin Concert Hall, the Issue Project Room, Roulette Concert Space, the cell, the Firehouse Space, Spectrum, and the Greenwich House.

Mr. Arnone completed his doctoral studies at Cornell University where he studied historical performance practice with Malcolm Bilson. During that time, he presented recitals using period instruments spanning the entire history of the piano, from eighteenth-century five-octave pianos to mid-nineteenth-century precursors to the modern piano. In addition, he was active as a musicologist, focusing research on the music of Brahms and the performing culture of the mid-to-late-nineteenth century. This led to the publication of two articles as well as lecture-presentations at a number of universities, and, in 2003, at the national meeting of the American Musicological Society. Mr. Arnone holds degrees from the Boston Conservatory, the University of Michigan, and a Doctorate in Musical Arts from Cornell University. Principal teachers include Malcolm Bilson, Marilyn Nonken, Logan Skelton, Jonathan Bass, Penelope Crawford, and William Heiles.