

MEMPHIS
PLAY TIME
2022



**NEKO3 X PLAYTIME FESTIVAL
PROGRAM:**

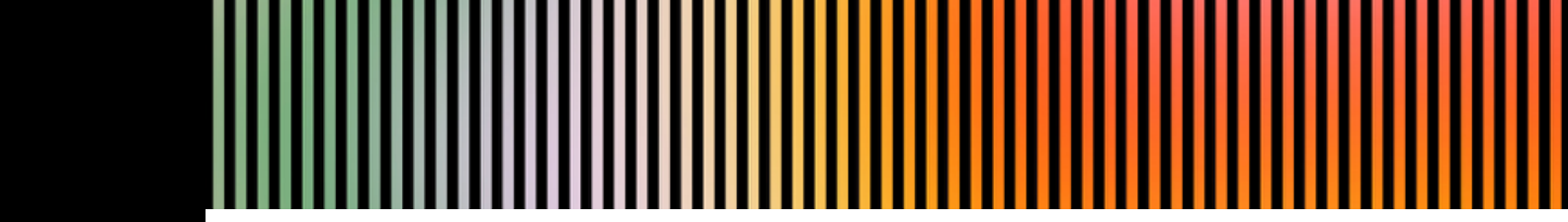
Remy Siu: new notations for [3] players (2019-ongoing)

Marcella Lucatelli: The Other Heading (2021)

Xavier Bonfill: three_four_maybe (2020-2021)

Simon Løffler: e (2017)

Alexander Schubert: vertex hand (2021)



For the PlayTime festival 2022, NEKO3 presents a concert of varied program by modern-day composers, both works written specifically for the ensemble and others worked on in close collaboration with their creators. The focus has been laid on the composer and the ensemble functioning as a unity, blending artistic research with a profound interest in inter-human connections. Over this concert we united the pieces that speak the most to us, and whose creators share the same language with us, to create something up close and personal.

Sometimes we've been asked "what's the point for us to play new music?". Any form of art is a reflection of the emotional side of the human reality and the society. If we take all of that away, we only have history which is essentially just data. If one thinks about the people in the future who look back to this day, they would only be able to read the data but not ie. grasp a feeling from that era. That is basically why we play contemporary music. Also, there are so many different styles and languages of contemporary music, so being musicians we should not only take it and play it but also try to find composers that we feel resonate with our experiences, or close enough to us to be able to work with them personally which becomes a reflection of ourselves. That leads us to have these composers in the program - they are composers we have worked together with for years, or will work with for years. Many of them are collaboration processes - we are very involved in the development of the actual pieces. So the pieces in the program feel much more personal to us. The program is curated in a way of how do we believe that we can give an experience to the audience, rather than just a compilation of individual works. For that reason, some of the pieces we also try to think as a way of installation, to introduce it to the audience and trying to connect one piece to other so it makes more sense - giving them a more complete experience. This concert program represents our maturing as an ensemble. After years of trying out a variety of works, collaborating with their creators, internal discussions and an extensive process of trial and error we are starting to settle on repertoire that we genuinely enjoy - a highly important step in our process of development. The fact that it happens around the time of our graduation is a meaningful, symbolical coincidence. All the pieces offered today are a small part of our human experience and we feel them as an extension of who we are and the artistic process we have been undertaking for the past few years. Many times we try to become a spectator or third person in the concerts we offer. It is important to maintain an intellectual and artistic honesty, that is the key to bringing something real to a stage.



© Niklas Ottander

NEKO3

Situated in the crossroads of instrumental music and multidisciplinary art, NEKO3 is an ensemble with an aim of pushing forward and crossing the boundaries of contemporary art and exhausting all possible pathways leading thereto. Working with composers and artists from different disciplines of art, regardless of their age, being or background and promoting equality and diversity. Reaching out to the general public through educational events, such as workshops and rehearsals open to the audience. Constructing their image as a contemporary music ensemble turned into a rock band with the air of an art collective. Revolutionization of the concept of concert, the main medium of displaying the art of a per-se musical ensemble, is a central theme for NEKO3. They thread a program of individual works united in their aesthetic, narrative or other dominant factor, into one whole. Every detail intra- and extra-musical will be taken into account and molded to serve the idea, from flexible use of space with regards to the performers and audience to transitions between works, clothing, light design and on. Pursuing the goal of making their work known and accessible to all, the group engages in multi-faceted, creative PR, between individual, standing-out visual design for promoting each concert entity and the group itself, and an active social media presence ranging from simple concert advertisements to performance videos and behind-the-scenes -livestreams. One of the group's latest public outreach initiatives is "NEKO.Lab", a series of monthly open-to-audience activities like (physically and virtually) open rehearsals and micro-residencies for young up-and-coming composers and artists, which aim to increase the accessibility of contemporary art to general public.

NEKO's future goal is abundantly clear: bridging the gap between all audiences and modern art, which is too often considered difficult to comprehend and exclusive to specialists.

THE ENSEMBLE

NEKO3 is a Copenhagen-based contemporary music ensemble consisting of three members: pianist Fei Nie and two percussionists Lorenzo Colombo and Kalle Hakosalo. The ensemble is working towards the creation of a new musical language and repertoire. Placed between acoustic and electronic music, NEKO3 builds a narrative and concept for each concert and thereby making it a unique experience for the audience.

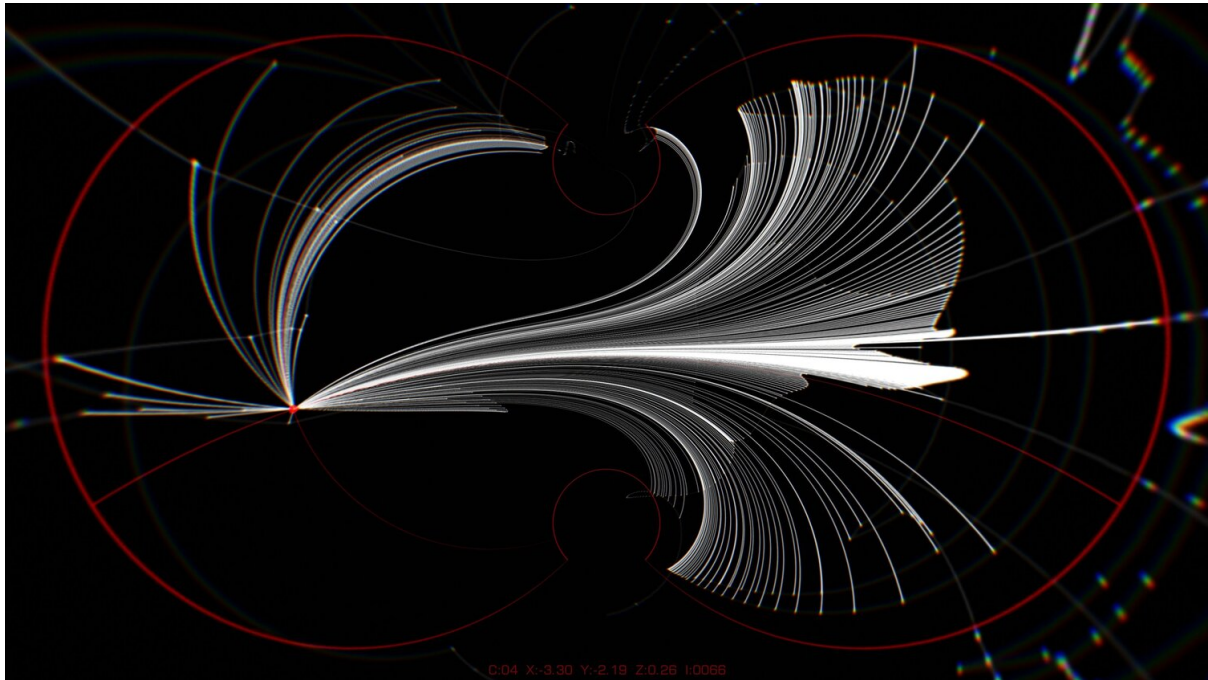
NEKO3 is continuously working with composers to commission and premiere new works, especially focusing on the interplay between images, electronic devices, videos, lights, and seeking to integrate music, visual art, installations, and body performance into one conceptual whole.

Since its formation in 2017 NEKO3 has performed at festivals such as Dark Music Days in Iceland, Kammer Klang in London, Sound of Stockholm, SPOR festival in Århus, Klang Festival, Pulsar Festival, Moderne Mondag, and Sonic Festival in Copenhagen. Recent performances include an invitation to perform in Bára Gíslandóttir's debut concert with the newly-composed work "Viddir" written for the acoustics of Grundtvigs Church, and the premieres of the new multidisciplinary trio concerto "Yes for No" by Xavier Bonfill as soloists with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra and the Aarhus Sinfonietta.

In the coming season the trio is invited to perform in eg. GAS festival (Göthenburg), Unerhörte Musik (Berlin), Arts Incubator(Seoul) and collaborate with composers and artists like Alexander Schubert, Juliana Hodkinson.

In 2018 the ensemble recorded its first EP with music by Danish composer Jeppe Just Christensen and in 2020 they released their second EP with music by Mads Emil Dreyer. From 2019 the ensemble has been mentored by the renowned contemporary musician Antoine Francoise.

Remy Siu: new notations for [3] players (2019-ongoing)



© Remy Siu

“new notations – for [multi] player” is an interactive digital system designed to accommodate as many play-styles as possible. The work asks the players to explore a virtual space via hardware controls which transform their movement and actions to sound. Every performance will be different. A maximum of four players can explore this space together and collaborate with one another to sculpt an audio-visual performance.

The work rejects fixed paper scores, western notation, and traditional instruments for a mutable delivery system, game mechanics, and digital synthesis. As opposed to a one-way transmission of ideas from composer to score to performer, the system provides a space for the interests of the composer to be met—and interacted with—by the agency of the players.

“new notations” is an ongoing project designed to be played in performance and exhibited in a gallery context.

During every play-through, the software records player input. This allows for a “replay” of input to be fed back into the system in real-time. As the work continues to be performed, the database of recorded input increases in size. Future exhibition opportunities allow for entire performances to be recalled, or for “replays” to be mixed, creating large possibilities for variety.

The piece reflects our passion for audio visual art and gaming. We found in Remy's material an infinite potential. The starting concept, to have a virtual world that becomes score and music at the same time has encouraged us to experiment with ways to convey this feeling of immesiveness to the public. From a chamber musician's point of view it is fascinating how a work with such open and non-conventional form still features these possible, quasi-hidden points of connection between players so that their existence becomes something of an incentive for players to pursue. This connects to an other interesting thought from a gamer's viewpoint, about the piece lacking clear goals and instead being in this perpetual motion without longer-lasting causal relationships - this leaves the players to find their missions and meanings elsewhere, focusing more on the stunning visual and aural aspects of it. Remy's approach is totally different from any composer we have worked with, and he has been extremely open towards us experimenting with the piece in an installation format, so we have tried to present it in many different ways in different venues.

Marcella Lucatelli: The Other Heading (2020-21)



© Anna Drvnik

“The Other Heading” is a piece on language, sound and alienation. Words are replaced by sounds, cries are replaced by space and space is mistaken by any idea of linguistic definition. Before the creation of the piece, Lucatelli explored the individual background of the three of us in order to compose a meticulously shaped piece about

monolingualism, sonic interaction and incommunicability. Since one of the piece’s central triggers is the question of linguistic and cultural identity, its trajectories touch on several issues relevant to current debates on multiculturalism. These issues include all the colourful shades of colonialism, the tacit or explicit censorship that falls on “other” languages or linguistic “excesses” and the constantly generative frictions of translation.”

Marcela is an extremely talented vocalist and performer herself, we have attended her own performances many times and always been in love with the way she manages to convey such a diverse and multifaceted artistic universe every time she takes the stage. We have been absorbed by this uncommon energy, a rare elegance that tries to push the barriers of the rational. Marcela is the demonstration that apparently different and distant worlds can coexist and dialogue with each other, that the sound material can be created, destroyed and reinvented again without having to respect a dogma or a precise rule. Performing a work by Marcela is a big challenge. One is led to work on one's own limits and weaknesses, elevating them to art. “The Other Heading” is a personal portrait of NEKO3 and allowed us to discover unknown sides of the ensemble, putting three very different personalities up on display. Working on the piece with its creator was for us among the first experiences of seeing the seemingly nonsensical gestures connected and not making sense, and still making sense.

Xavier Bonfill: three_four_maybe (2020-21)



© Alexander Banck-Petersen

'three_four_maybe'

is a piece commissioned by and dedicated to us. The piece is the result of a long collaboration with the ensemble, and a sister piece to YES FOR NO (2019-20), a multimedia concerto with NEKO3 as soloists.

On three_four_maybe we control a grand piano and three LED panels in real time using midi controllers and 24 solenoids (DC-controlled motors) with which the piano has been prepared. The process is of a very electronic nature, but the resulting sound is entirely acoustic. The instrument behaves, on purpose, mechanically, but the performance requires finesse, virtuosity and chamber music skills from the performers.

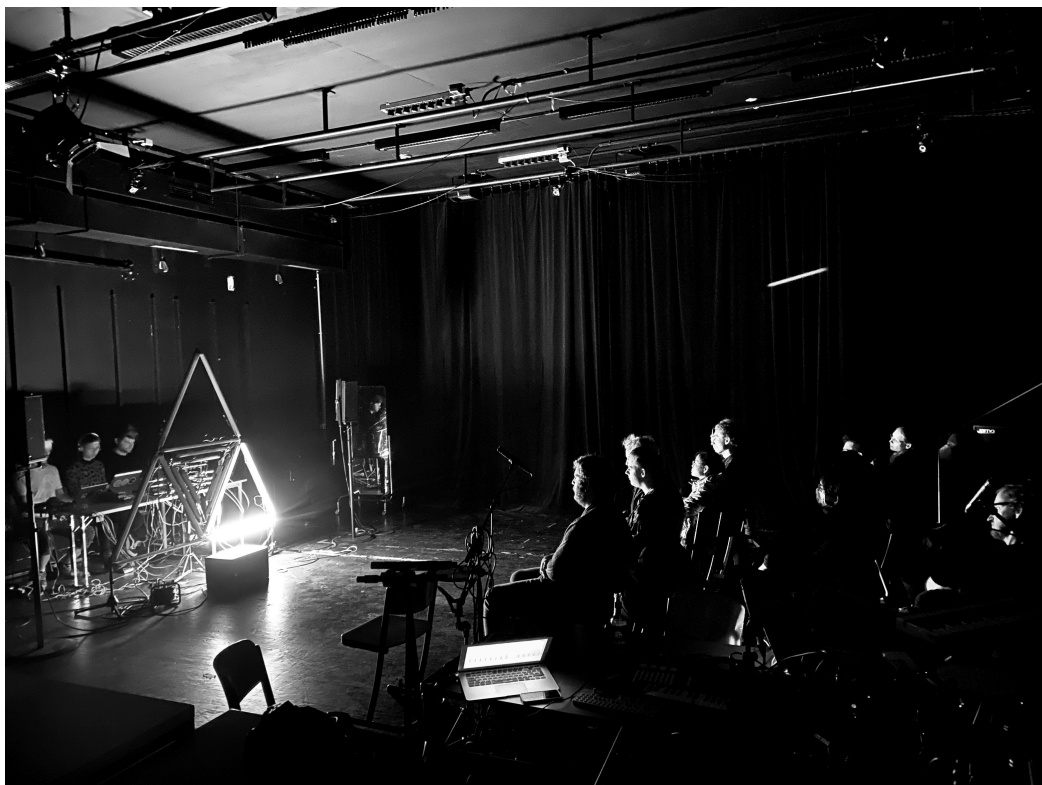
three_four_maybe utilises quotes from Ludwig Wittgenstein's "Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus" displayed on the LEDs as a narrative device, in which text and meaning, notation and sound; mirror each other in a synaesthetic way.

The collaboration with Xavier was born after years of work and friendship. We worked hand in hand developing many aspects of the piece together. The piece had a strong emotional impact on us because it develops a sound material that is rooted in the music we listen to every day: complex polyrhythms close to the world of EDM, or simple melodies often found in artists like Aphex Twin. Xavier's music speaks to us this way - it's a language that we feel is ours, a language that we can interpret in the best possible way.

Simon Løffler: e (2017)

15 fluorescent lights of the T5 type are organized into an upright standing triangular sculpture, clearly visible to the audience. 3 different sizes of fluorescent lights are used: 9x21 Watt, 3x13 Watt and 3x8 Watt. The musicians are seated behind the light sculpture at a table controlling 5 lights each. In the middle of the light sculpture hangs a 30 cm triangle, preferably of bronze, with 3 beaters on each side (9 in total). The 3 beaters on each side should be different to ensure a variety of spectrum, the brightest of which should be in the middle on each side. Each musician controls 3 beaters on one side with a small 3-note piano.

Simon's earlier piece 'b' was the first one in the post-instrumental aesthetic that we worked on and later started to majorly pursue. The process of learning it and the details we discovered within it resulted in more knowledge about chamber music, the phrasing of contemporary music and general understanding of aesthetic that we have possibly ever extracted from any other process. With Simon's works, both the mechanic part and the piece itself are extremely fascinating, almost functioning precisely like a clock. Finding sound potential in objects not designed to make music is a concept that we have always loved. Starting from the lesson of Cage, this brought to our days finds ample space in Simon's work with great elegance. We hope Simon's work stimulates the audience to look for and increasingly appreciate everyday's sonic occurrences in the surrounding world, that are often ignored.



Alexander Schubert: vertex hand (2021-2022)

This project with Alexander Schubert will be our main focus in 2022. We have always been huge fans of Schubert's work, so it was a big pleasure for us to have him respond affirmatively to our question of composing something new for and with us. Our personal, common dive into his musical world started later in 2021 when we arranged 'vertex hand', an electronic radio piece (which instantly struck us by its sheer beauty and craftsmanship), for three live-performers. This process in itself majorly widened our knowledge of producing and performing electronic music. Then in early November 2021 we finally had our first meet up in real life with the composer. From early on we understood it was a match made in heaven. 'vertex hand' is a piece very close to a band setting, which is something we strongly identify as. Beside the contemporary, the daily music taste of NEKO3 is very broad: we listen music from ARCA to Laurie Anderson, NONAME, Anderson .Paak, Sigur Rós, Björk, Aphex Twin and Michael Brailey. The project with Schubert really satisfies our guilty pleasure, letting us musically meet with the things we all love in our daily life and bridging the gaps between different styles of the musical spectrum.



Bio of the composers:

Remy Siu is a composer and new media artist based in Vancouver. Recently, his work has involved the construction of automated and variable performance apparatuses that employ light, sound, software, and the body. He actively creates with Hong Kong Exile, Mahaila Patterson-O'Brien, Vicky Chow, Howie Tsui, Theatre Replacement, and others. Remy studied at Simon Fraser University Contemporary Arts with David MacIntyre, Owen Underhill, and Barry Truax. He has also studied with Rodney Sharman. In 2021, he founded sunset visitor, an independent video game studio focused on narrative experiences. He is also currently the Co-Artistic Director of Hong Kong Exile.

Marcela Lucatelli can already be hailed as one of the most innovative vocalists and composers of her generation. Born in Brazil and based in Denmark, Marcela has earned international recognition for her extremely original, sensuous and politically charged performance works. Her works have been premiered at diverse festivals and international events such as Donaueschinger Musiktage, Darmstadt Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Nordic Music Days, KLANG, Copenhagen Jazz Festival and All Ears Festival for Improvised Music.

Xavier Bonfill is a Catalan composer and performer living in Copenhagen. His artistic output encompasses works for traditional instruments, electronics, video and other multimedia formats such as interactive websites and apps. In his works, a form of dialogue between different media and art forms is created between text, images, acoustic and electronic sound. Duality, opposition and even contradiction are a characteristic of his aesthetics: where the poetic is set against the immediately superficial, the extravagant against the intimate, the crooked against the naive.

Xavier will make his debut from the Soloist Class at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in May 2022. He is the founder of "haknam", a new ensemble dedicated to performing his music and exploring new forms of interactivity in electronic music. He has also engaged in a long collaboration with the Copenhagen-based trio NEKO3, resulting in a multimedia concerto grosso "YES FOR NO", and a piece for prepared and deconstructed piano and LED boards "three_four_maybe". He has self-released a number of albums and EPs.

Simon Løffler's works range from very intimate set-ups to enigmatic constructions, embracing traditional instruments (transformed in various ways) as well as novel instrumental concepts. Løffler studied Composition with Bent Sørensen, Hans Abrahamsen and Niels Rosing-Schow at The Royal Danish Academy of Music and Music Theory with Lars Bisgaard at The Royal Danish Academy of Music, Composition with Wolfgang Heiniger at Hochschule für musik Hanns Eisler, Berlin, Composition with Simon Steen-Andersen at The Royal Academy of Music in Aarhus. Further studies at A.PASS (advanced performance and scenography studies), Brussels. Since 2017 he has been a lecturer in Composition at the Royal Danish Academy of Music. His works has been performed by ensembles such as ensemble Nickel, Asamisimasa (NO), Scenatet, (DK), Ensemble Adapter (DE), Suono Mobile (DE), Plus-Minus Ensemble (UK), Speak Percussion (AU), Ensemble Pamplemousse (US), We Spoke (CH), Ensemble hand werk (DE), Curious Chamber Players (SE), Athelas Sinfonietta (DK), Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart (DE), Defunensemble (FI) , among others.

Alexander Schubert studied bioinformatics, multimedia composition. He's a professor at the Musikhochschule Hamburg. Schubert's interest explores the border between the acoustic and electronic world. In music composition, immersive installation and staged pieces he examines the interplay between the digital and the analogue. He creates pieces that realize test settings or interaction spaces that question modes of perception and representation. Continuing topics in this field are authenticity and virtuality. The influence and framing of digital media on aesthetic views and communication is researched in a post-digital perspective. Recent research topics in his works were virtual reality, artificial intelligence and online-mediated artworks. Schubert is a founding member of ensembles such as "Decoder". His works have been performed more than 700 times in the last few years by numerous ensembles in over 30 countries.

Bio of the musicians:

Lorenzo Colombo is a percussionist and performer based in Copenhagen, Denmark and dedicated to researching and promoting new music. He is presently a student at the DKDM soloist class. He collaborates with contemporary music ensembles such as Divertimento Ensemble, MDI Ensemble, Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen, Sentieri Salvaggi.

He has been identified as a promising young performer by the Ulysses Network for the season 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 being involved in different activities such as a collaboration with International Ensemble Modern Akademie - IEMA.

Lorenzo has been selected as percussion player for the ULYSSES ENSEMBLE 2018 and is a winner of the "Premio Nazionale delle Arti" in 2011, the Yamaha Foundation of Europe in 2013, the International Percussion Competition in 2015. Additionally, he is one of the eight international percussion players chosen by Steven Schick to participate in the "Manifeste 2016" hosted by IRCAM in Paris.

He has performed in several festivals (including the "Manifeste 2016" IRCAM Paris, Warsaw Autumn Festival 2014, Darmstadt Summer Courses 2014, "Biennale Musica 2016" Venice , Gaudeamus Muziekweek 2017, "Klang Festival 2016" in Copenhagen, "Rondò Divertimento Ensemble", MI.TO, Milano Musica) both as soloist and chamber musician.

Founder of the ensemble Neko3, Lorenzo is working with numerous chamber groups trying to explore different languages including electronics, videos, installations and others.

Kalle Hakosalo is a Finnish percussionist and performer. Passionate about making his work more accessible to general public, he performs extensively as a soloist and chamber musician as well as in diverse cross-artistic settings.

Hakosalo has been featured in ie. Dark Music Days, Spor Festival, Darmstädter Ferienkurse, Los Angeles Monday Evening Concerts, Moderne Mandag and Swiss Foundation For Young Musicians in venues such as Cité du Musique et de la Danse Strasbourg, Muziekgebouw Eindhoven, Colburn School Zipper Concert Hall, Snape Maltings, Helsinki Music Centre and Herkulesaal München; collaborated with ensembles and performers like Ekkozoon, red fish blue fish and Marco Fusi; and is a founding member of ensembles NEKO3 and km2. He has presented lectures and workshops at eg. the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and the Sibelius-Academy, and his work has been supported by ie. Kone Foundation, Idella Foundation, Finnish Music Foundation and Pro Musica Foundation.

Hakosalo obtained his Master's degree (with honors) at the Hochschule für Musik Basel (CH) with prof. Christian Dierstein, and Bachelor's degree from the Royal Danish Academy of Music (Copenhagen, Denmark) with prof. Gert Mortensen, and has spent three months as a Visiting Scholar at the University of California, San Diego in the percussion department of prof. Steven Schick. An eager proponent of contemporary music, Hakosalo frequently collaborates with composers and artists like Jasna Veličković, Juliana Hodkinson, Alexander Schubert, Marcela Lucatelli, Jeppe Ernst, Irene Suosalo, Bára Gísladóttir, Xavier Bonfill, Tytti Arola and Lauri Supponen, having premiered dozens of new solo and chamber / ensemble works.

Fei Nie is a Copenhagen-based pianist and performer, devoted to developing and de-mystifying contemporary music and art.

She has collaborated with groups and ensembles such as SCENATET, Athelas Sinfonietta Copenhagen, Danish indie rock group Efterklang and Danish National Symphony Orchestra, and is a founding member of ensembles NEKO3 and Duo DAN/NIE, as well as founding member of new music collective INU4 for creating The Danish New Music Academy summer course.

She has closely worked with composers Bára Gísladóttir, Christian Winther Christensen, Simon Løffler, Jeppe Just Christensen, Juliana Hodkinson, Simon Steen-Andersen, Hans Abrahamsen, Steve Reich, Michael Gordon, David Lang, Alexander Schubert and etc. She has performed with conductors Peter Rundel, Brad Lubman, Jessica Cotties, Jean Thorel, both as soloist and chamber musician.

Fei has performed in venues and festival, such as the Den Sorte Diamant(the Royal Danish Library-Queen's Hall), Harpa, Sound to Stockholm, Nordic Music Days, Kammer Klang, Bang on a Can Summer Festival, Dark Music Days, Cairo Contemporary Music Days, Klang Festival, SPOR Festival, Pulsar Contemporary Music Festival.

We would like to extend our gratitude to

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP:

Apart from the work descriptions and CV's provided by the composers (Marcela Lucatelli, Remy Siu, Alexander Schubert, Xavier Bonfill and Simon Løffler) , we (Fei Nie, Lorenzo Colombo and Kalle Hakosalo) solemnly declare to be the sole authors of this text.

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