

collectif9

FOLK NOIR

biographies and programme notes



Nicole Lizée. Photo by Richmond Lam.

NICOLE LIZÉE

Called “a brilliant musical scientist” (CBC), “breathtakingly inventive” (Sydney Times Herald), and “utterly inspiring” (I Care If You Listen), award winning composer and filmmaker Nicole Lizée explores themes of malfunction, psychedelia, turntablism, rave culture, urbex, film theory, thrash metal, experimental fashion, and glitch to create a new kind of expression. She writes for unorthodox instrument combinations including the Atari 2600 video game console, vintage board games, omnichords, stylophones, Simon™, Ouija boards, and karaoke tapes.

Her commission list of over 60 works includes the Kronos Quartet, the BBC Proms, the New York Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, Bang On a Can, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, l’Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, London Sinfonietta, Donaueschingen Festival, stargaze, the National Film Board, Australian Art Orchestra, Southbank Sinfonia, Colin Currie, Sō Percussion, Eve Egoyan, Tapestry Opera, Quatuor Bozzini, Continuum, and the Banff Centre.

Nicole’s works are regularly performed worldwide to international acclaim. She is the recipient of numerous awards, prizes, and honours for her work.

nicolelizee.com

STEVE RAEGELE

Montreal guitarist Steve Raegele plays composed music and improvised music. His style has emerged from a love of jazz, psychedelia, rock and roll, pop music and art music. His recording *Last Century* was released in 2010 on influential Vancouver label



Steve Raegele. Photo by Murray Lightburn.

Songlines Recordings to critical acclaim. He has a long standing association with drummers Thom Gossage (Other Voices) and Isaiah Ceccarelli (Lieux-dits), and has shared the stage with many of the key figures in Canada's creative music community. In 2013 he performed Nicole Lizée's *2012: Triple Concerto For Power Trio and Orchestra* as a featured soloist with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. He has performed or recorded with John Hollenbeck, Drew Gress, Bendik Hofseth, Ingrid Jensen, Miles Perkin, Emma Frank, Nick Fraser, The Doxas Brothers, L'Orchestre National de Jazz de Montreal, The Besnard Lakes, Christine Jensen Jazz Orchestra, Ensemble KORE, Architek Percussion, TorQ Percussion, Nicole Lizée's SaskPower The Australian Art Orchestra and with indie rock legends The Dears as well as Dears frontman Murray A. Lightburn.

COLLECTIF9

Known for their innovative programming and unique approach to chamber music, Juno-nominated Montreal string nonet collectif9 performs “with an infectious energy and vigour that grabs an audience’s attention” (The WholeNote). Since their 2011 debut, collectif9 has performed numerous concerts across North America, Europe, and Asia. As performers of classical and contemporary music, the ensemble combines the power of an orchestra with the agility of a chamber ensemble. collectif9 operates on the premise that a change of context can influence communication and experience.

collectif9 presents new programmes every season in Montréal, Canada, and their national and international touring schedule includes performances in chamber music series, festivals, universities, and more. Highlights include concerts in the Festival de Música de Morelia (Mexico), La Folle journée de Nantes (France), Festival de Lanaudière (Québec), Shenzhen Concert Hall (China), and Sound Unbound (Barbican Centre, London). The ensemble continually explores new repertoire and new artistic partnerships with composers, video artists, poets, lighting designers, and other inspired collaborators, to create multidisciplinary projects that come to life in acoustic or amplified settings.

collectif9 is grateful to the arts councils of Montreal, Quebec, and Canada, and to FACTOR for their continued financial support, but also to their local and Canadian community, thanks to whom our governments ensure support for the arts, an essential investment for the quality of our lives.

collectif9.ca

PROGRAMME NOTES BY NICOLE LIZÉE



Cathedral Mountain (1928) by Arthur Lismer.

CATHEDRAL MOUNTAIN (2011)

Cathedral Mountain is inspired by Group of Seven member Arthur Lismer's painting of the same name. The colour schemes and textures in this work immediately evoke certain rhythmic and musical gestures. The shapes and contours are exposed, well-defined, twisting, infinite, relentless - maybe even violent. There is a great depth to the layering, creating a striking multidimensional effect. The surfaces appear to be from varying materials - the artist somehow creates the illusion of velvet,

carpet, wood, and clay. The work in many ways reflects the musical ingredients in my music.

A major component of this piece is the notion of focus and perspective as they apply to a work of art and, ultimately, its sonic counterpart. Filtering, blurring, saturation and in particular, zoom, are acoustically emulated. When one views a painting up close - or zooms using a 'macro lens' - minute details are revealed: brush strokes, shapes, cracks, hidden colours, and perhaps even pareidolia.

This idea of painting magnification intrigues me and I am far from alone in this interest. A brief internet search reveals that there are groups of people who spend their time zooming in on paintings - sometimes referred to as "extreme artwork magnification". Some are looking for icons or religious meaning, others simply get lost in the minutia, while others are moved by the sudden appearance of new illusions previously obscured by the big picture.

ULTRAVIOLET BLUES (2023)

"The blacklight poster was actually a medium capable of mimicking the effects of (a) new wonder drug. With the ability to glow and vibrate under ultraviolet light, the posters could simulate the sensations and visual distortions one experienced during an acid trip."

Counterculture historian Daniel Donahue

"The psychedelic discourse recognises two fundamental axioms that, strictly speaking, contradict one another. One axiom presumes that our world is false on principle...The other axiom is that the world is merely not truly knowable by us."

Music journalist Diedrich Diederichsen



Portrait of Isabella Blow by Ben Levy.

ISABELLA BLOW AT SOMERSET HOUSE (2015)

Isabella Blow (1958–2007) was a passionate advocate for those who would bend the rules and take risks within the world of haute couture as she unearthed talented visionaries who were challenging convention. This homage to Blow and her posthumous exhibit at Somerset House in London in 2013 is inspired by photo sets of disembodied mannequin heads wearing hats and accoutrements from her personal collection, evoking the effect of having been curated from beyond the grave.

MODERN HEARTS (2008)

Filmmaker David Cronenberg has created a large body of work dealing with themes that simultaneously elicit feelings of fascination, revulsion, wonder and



dread. His early works especially, are concerned with body modification, mutation, infection, and the melding of technology into human corporeal experience. *Modern Hearts* uses this idea of the blending of the organic and the inorganic, as well as the mechanization of the human experience. Wood and metal meet and are transformed through robotic and digital processes while the player obstinately expresses relentless figures of organic harmony and melody.



Still from the film *Videodrome* (1983) by David Cronenberg.



Photo from the film *Destination Moon* (1950) by Irving Pichel.

Jupiter Moon Menace (2001)

Inspired by the 1950s and 60s sci-fi aesthetic, *Jupiter Moon Menace* is an attempt to musically convey some of the iconography and semiotics of that period. It references films dealing with themes such as time travel, technology (and what that technology would look and act like), and the implications of life outside of our terrestrial boundaries. The imagined reality of those filmic worlds is defined both by an often idealistic vision of the future and by a now quaint but fascinating visual style: smooth curves and clean white lines coupled with analog, binary systems.

Dr. Heywood Floyd's sleek black attire and the white jumpsuits of the Ultra-Violence posse give a glimpse into the style of the future. One, a natural extension of 60s Mod fashion; the other, a twisted tip of the bowler hat to a time when the tyranny of couture would cease, replaced by a common utilitarian jumpsuit. Spaceships and other modes of conveyance share a sparse, nordic cleanliness, as does Korova bar - eerily lit and ghastly in its hyper stylishness. Other themes emerge: the mad scientist whose keen intellect invariably clashes with the mere mortal minds that surround him; artificial intelligence in the form of computers or robots, threatening to replace or supersede man's position in the hierarchy of the known universe.



Still from films by Stanley Kubrick: *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and, at the bottom left, *A Clockwork Orange* (1971).



Keep Driving, I'm Dreaming (2017)

Keep Driving, I'm Dreaming draws tone and timbre from the neo-noir cinema of the 1980s and 1990s... in the hyper stylized way motion and travel scenes are filmed and treated... romanticized inertia into hyper kinetic neon rage. Sounds emerge from transitory states...fluctuating between FM radio stations...ghosting like the barely audible music on a warped cassette tape long since overdubbed...further suspended in time by the placelessness of an automobile trip with its bodies in motion, careening around corners in improbable locales or holding steady along unrelentingly rigid lanes at dusk. The rear view mirror reflects a place you never were.