

The Brandeis Hoot
Brandeis University's Community Newspaper — Waltham, Mass.

Slosberg guest performs avant-garde, multimedia piece

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October 24, 2014
Section: [Arts, Etc.](#)

Brandeis' latest addition to the 2014-2015 Concert Series was striking in its combination of solo piano playing and electronics. The unique performance, titled "The Electro-Acoustic Piano" (EAPiano), is actually a project that was initiated in 2009. It supports the creative minds of modern pianists and aids them in all of their musical pursuits. EAPiano's resulting work is so original that the compositions need to be experienced—seen, heard and felt—in order to be fully appreciated. Over the course of its five-year run, EAPiano has supported more than 20 composers in their musical endeavors and the finished pieces have been performed in Canada, Mexico, Belgium, Germany, England and the United States.

The musical performance was memorable because of the way it integrated traditional instrumental music and electronics, thereby creating a distinct artistic performance. The concert was innovative because it merged diverse sounds, which allowed the audience to experience the performance on several levels.

One piece, "Medusa in Fragments," combined solo piano playing, surround sound electronics and video projection. A woman, playing the part of Medusa, was projected onto the stage, and the combination of eerie cinematography—oftentimes characterized by shots of Medusa's moving lips—and Medusa's eloquent, purposeful dialogue led to a rich viewing. This avant-garde video combined with a piano solo that was dark, gloomy and piercing. Sound electronics created a multi-dimensional performance that can only be described as a wholly new experience; so many senses were captivated by one piece.

The EAPiano performance featured Keith Kirchoff, a notable pianist and composer. A strong presence on stage, Kirchoff's talent and confidence make him a captivating performer to watch. Driven by his passion for contemporary music, Kirchoff has performed more than 100 new works and has commissioned more than 24 pieces. He has traveled across the country, performing concerts at a string of colleges and universities. Over the course of his career he has been recognized for his array of accomplishments and his contribution to a new world of music.

Interestingly, the concert incorporated the full spectrum of human emotion—from overwhelming, judgment-clouding sadness to exuberant, sun-filled bliss. The pieces themselves elicited such strong emotions from the audience members, myself included, that it could be difficult at times to determine to what degree we were influenced by the musical composition. For the most part I came to the conclusion that the music was the driving force for most of my emotions. One composition, "Every Problem is a Nail," was both discordant and unsettling. From the moment the first note was played to the moment the piece had finished with a drawn-

out chord it was apparent that a broody, dark and menacing cloud had formed in Slosberg. It threatened all the while to drench the audience and submerge us in a river of pain.

“Utuquq” incorporated the piano, Xbox Kinect and electronics. Every time Kirchoff waved his hand above the Kinect, it played a bubbly, gargled sound that was in sync with the instrumental part of the composition. The idea of using a Kinect, a gadget originally intended for video games, and applying it to the musical realm is revolutionary; it redefines the way we think about music.

All in all the concert was powerful in its ability to capture the audience and amaze them at every corner—each piece had its own identity, entirely separate from the composition played before it. One audience member had difficulty explaining the premise of “Medusa in Fragments” during the intermission because he couldn’t determine what verb to use to describe how he experienced the performance. He decided to use “watched,” though that is actually too limiting for him because the performance was experienced in various other ways. There’s no doubt in my mind that as music continues to evolve and change in fundamental ways that the musical “experience” will continue to change, too.

- originally published at <http://thebrandeishoot.com/articles/14533>