

Re:Sound at SPACES (June 9)

by Mike Telin



As we say about Cleveland weather — if you don't like it, wait twenty minutes and it will change. That analogy also applied to the repertoire performed on the Re:Sound New Music Festival concert at SPACES gallery on Saturday afternoon, June 9.

Presented in the intimate, acoustically-pleasing Mistake Lab, Austin-based

cellist James Burch began his set with Phong Tran's *Durability Problems* (2017). Burch brought a dark, rich sound, loads of technique, and great intonation to the five-minute, mercurial work full of sudden tempo changes and mood shifts.

Composer Corey Cunningham's *From Down Here* (2016) is an engaging study in contrasting cells of emotion. Burch gave a committed performance of the eighteen-minute piece, tossing off complicated string crossings and pizzicato harmonics with flair.

Next up was Chicago-based percussionist John Corkill, who presented two works by composers from that city. Seung-Won Oh's slow, colorful *Circle* (2004) calls for a variety of instruments, including a water bowl, woodblocks, and tam-tams. One by one, Corkill methodically dipped each tam into the water bowl, then hung them on the metal frame to dry.

Kyong Mee Choi's mesmerizing *Flowerlips* (2006) features long, melodic passages on the vibraphone that create a river of sound, while staccatos depict the petals hitting the water. Switching to hard mallets, Corkill produced cascades of glissandos as the flowers floated away.

Chicago-based flutist Shanna Gutierrez began her set with Eric Chasalow's imaginative *Ariel Fantasy* (2017). The work interweaves the text of Ariel's song from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* with accents of spits and spats from the flute. Gutierrez has obviously taken the piece's vocal demands — which sometimes verge on *Sprechstimme* — quite seriously. Her voice is well-trained.

Switching to bass flute, Gutierrez sounded splendid during Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf's complex *atsiminimas* (2016). Written on three staves, the three-section, fifteen-minute work includes possibly every extended technique the instrument is capable of producing. Gutierrez's playing of the microtonal third section was brilliant.

The Columbus-based Tower Duo — Erin Helgeson Torres, flute, and Michael Rene Torres, saxophone — began their delightful set with Charlie Wilmoth's *Three Pieces* (2013). Described as a “broken-down, tiny toy machine,” the three-movement work is anything but child's play. Still, the first is filled with bouncy melodic passages that are passed between the instruments, conjuring up the idea of a musical teeter-totter. The second is rhythmic ping-pong, while the third weaves fast unison passages with off-kilter moments — no, the saxophonist is not behind.

The afternoon concluded with Michael Rene Torres' *Four Short Episodes* (2011), a study in dialogue between the two instruments. Episode one is defined by slow, dissonant scale motives in the flute, commented on by multiphonics in the sax. Number two, a brief musical romp, is followed by long, soft notes and loud flourishes in the third. The fourth is a collage of marches. Throughout, Tower Duo's performance was a joy to hear.

Published on ClevelandClassical.com June 19, 2018.

Click here for a printable copy of this article

[Return to the Front Page.](#)