

## No Exit and Zeitgeist to Explore New Sound Worlds

by Daniel Hathaway



The new music ensemble No Exit continues its longstanding collaboration with Zeitgeist, their counterparts from Minnesota's Twin Cities, with "New Sound Worlds," a free [online concert](#) that debuts on Friday, May 21 at 7:00 pm.

No Exit founder and artistic director Timothy Beyer said in a recent phone conversation that the mostly solo works on the program "get outside the traditional mold and deal with sound more than formal structure.

They're immersive, but cerebral, and they also force more active listening."

The exception is Frederic Rzewski's *Down by the Riverside*, the piano work that Nicholas Underhill will play at the beginning of the program. "He presents the tune in kind of a literal way, then he goes nuts," Beyer said.

James Rhodes will be featured in Garth Knox's *Viola Spaces*, a set of etudes the Scottish-born avant-garde composer and violist played in 2009 on the Cleveland Museum of Art's "Viva and Gala Around Town" series at Plymouth Church.

Clarinetist Gunnar Owen Hirthe, back in the saddle after hand surgery, will play Isang Yun's *Monologue* for bass clarinet, representing "a composer from the first generation of the sound as music movement," Beyer said.

Then, handing the program off to Zeitgeist, Beyer said that percussionist Heather Barringer will demonstrate various ways of creating a soundscape using a single gong in Harold Budd's *Lyrio*.

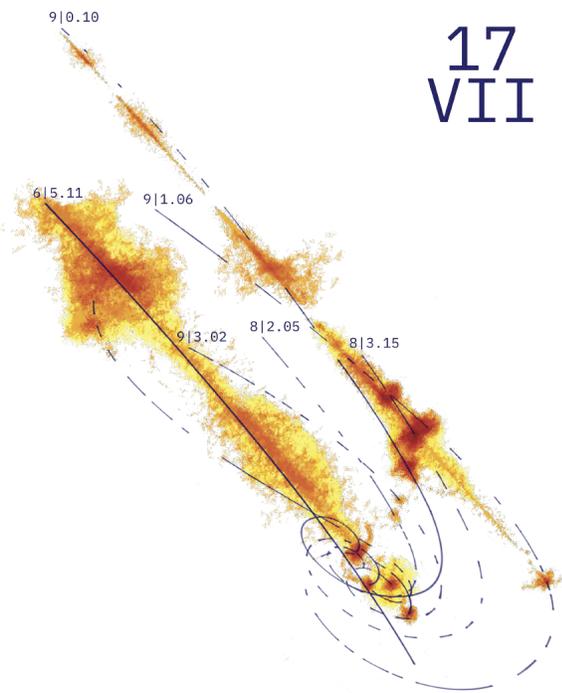
The program will introduce multimedia with *The Song of the Earth* by Philip Blackburn, who Beyer called a wonderful environmental filmmaker and composer. "Blackburn's work is beautiful, sublime, profound, and right on point." Patti Cudd will

be featured on vibraphone. “With the pandemic, soloistic music is the theme for the year,” Beyer noted.



Clarinetist Pat O’Keefe will wrap up the solo section of the program with Salvatore Sciarrino’s *Let Me Die Before I Wake*, which Beyer described as another personally stylized sound world, this one about a dream state.

Score  
**COINCIDENT Episode 4**  
*for Zeitgeist* Scott L. Miller  
2021



The program concludes with Scott Miller’s *Coincident Episode 4*, part of a continuing project between the composer, who is on the faculty of St. Cloud State University, and the musicians of Zeitgeist. The three earlier episodes are viewable [here](#).

I reached Miller via Zoom, who expanded on the description of the project on Zeitgeist’s website:

*COINCIDENT is a telematic, multi-episode, audiovisual collaboration between Zeitgeist, composer Scott L. Miller, visual artist Carole Kim, and an evolving list of artists. Each artist performs from their home studio, and they connect to each other through specialized software that facilitates*

*real-time performance with greatly reduced latency issues (lag in time due to internet connection). Because latency is reduced, but not gone, the music*

*embraces a certain amount of asynchronicity; individual events can occur at different times without compromising the musical idea. The music is paired with a projection world created by Carole Kim that is derived from micro-installations (located under her kitchen table) and projections performed in real-time with the music.*



In our Zoom conversation, Miller talked at length about telematic composition (collaboration among artists widely separated and linked through telecommunication), and the graphic notation he uses that leaves many performance decisions to the performers.

“One of the things that I like about graphic notation is how much agency it gives each performer to really be in the moment of making the music. And that I think is what makes it succeed with telematic music making because rather than attempt to synchronize their behavior with four, five, or six other people whose information arrives at different moments in time, everybody is simply in their own moment.”

It’s difficult to delve more deeply into the subject in an article of this scope. Perhaps it’s best to circle back to my conversation with Timothy Beyer, who ended our chat by saying, “It’s a great deal of fun having a new medium to be creative with. We can do things we couldn’t with live music, and harness the best of both worlds. Returning to live performance feels weird because we’ve gone so far down the rabbit hole.”

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