

11 April 2022

12.15 PM

Sounding  
Now



# About

Sit back and enjoy an exciting hour-long programme brought to you by students of the YST Composition Department. Experience the music of our time, here and now, with a full line-up of premieres at Soundbites: Sounding Now.



The concert kicks off with Alicia Diva Chandra's electronic work *Organised Cacophony*, which used the programming environment Sonic Pi to generate its musical components. Chua Zi Tao's *Composition for Electric Guitar and Modular Synthesizer* follows with an exploration of live signal processing between both electronic instruments. Chong Heng Li's *Emergence* for solo violin transports one to an intimate, yet powerful sound world that fuses elements from works such as Missy Mazzoli's *Vespers*, Chen Zhangyi's *Four Reflections*, and the standard *Moon River*. Chua Zi Tao's *Exuviations* is a 5-movement work for violin, yangqin, and piano, originally presented alongside dance students from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in collaboration with choreographer Dan Kwoh. The concert rounds off with Cliff Tan's *Lapis* for large ensemble, which was inspired by the current "genreless" movement in modern rock and is presented here as part of the composer's final year project.







ALICIA DIVA CHANDRA

Organised Cacophony (2022)  
for Fixed Media

No matter where I live, there is a lot of noise around me. I could not liken myself to the sounds of my surroundings but I was curious about how sounds perceived as noise could be organised in a piece. At the same time, I was interested in creating music using the programming language Ruby in Sonic Pi.

With the “noise” sounds and Sonic Pi as my medium, I created this piece *Organised Cacophony* where sounds that I associated with the possibility of causing cacophony were used as music material and manipulated in Sonic Pi. The music material was then recorded within Sonic Pi and transferred to Ableton. I mainly worked with tempo, rhythm and panning as my parameters in Sonic Pi, and with reverb and delay as the parameters in Ableton.

The choice in sounds goes from sounds that are generally perceived as noisy - short and loud noises that “bang”, “thump”, “clang” - to longer sounds that are more delicate and intricate in texture - more continuous noise - to a combination of these sounds which are further evolved together with effects.

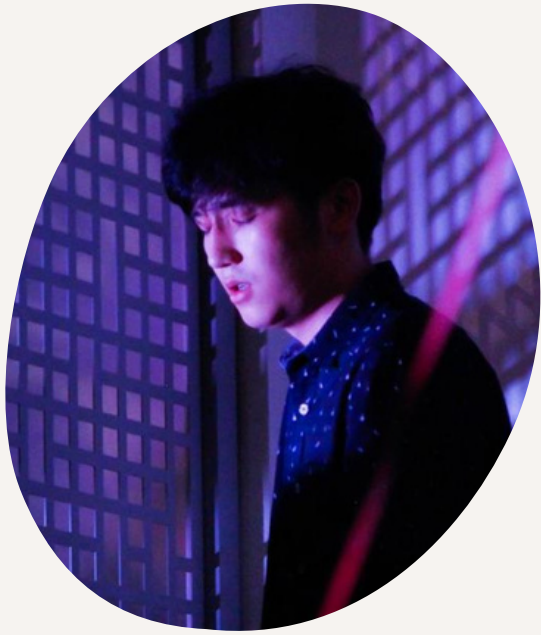
CHUA ZI TAO

Composition for Electric Guitar  
and Modular Synthesizer  
(2022)



*Composition for Electric Guitar and Modular Synthesizer* explores live signal processing between 2 electronic instruments. The electric guitar sound is first fed through pedal effects that are fixed for the duration of the piece. The modular synthesizer then makes parametric adjustments to both the guitar signal it receives and its internal oscillators. There are two simultaneous guitar loops, forming a slowly evolving drone texture that persists throughout the piece, while the two instruments transform simple musical materials from sporadic percussive gestures to a dreamy sound world.

This work is the result of a collaboration between myself and guitarist Adbul Hakiim. While most of the signal processing is created within the VCV Racks environment, Hakiim brought along a collection of unique pedals, including the Mandala Bananana pedal, which is used to produce the chromatic figurations in the piece. The signal processing was created using the VCV Racks software, a virtual modular synthesis environment.



CHONG HENG LI  
*Emergence (2022)*  
for Violin

*Emergence* embodies the spirit of emerging from one's shell – out from the confines of traditions and formalities.

The music evolves across time, borrowing melodies and sounds from different worlds: Eric Ewazen's *Trio for Horn, Violin, and Piano*, Sergei Prokofiev's *Sonata for 2 Violins in C major*, Missy Mazzioli's *Vespers*, Steven Snowden's *Through the Looking Glass (We Don't Have Enough Time)*, Chen Zhangyi's *Four Reflections*, and the standard *Moon River*. Gradually, these different sound worlds melt and compress into one another, forming a complex layer.

*Emergence* was originally written for violinist Elicia Neo as the introductory piece of *Emergent*, an interdisciplinary concert presented in YST as part of her Music, Collaboration and Production (MCP) capstone project, featuring students from LASALLE College of the Arts' Diploma in Dance programme.

# CHUA ZI TAO

Exuviations: 5 Dances for Violin,  
Yangqin and Piano (2021)



Exuviation: to shed a skin or shell; moulting

This five-movement work was created for a dance in collaboration with choreographer Dan Kwoh on the topic of grieving, reflecting on what it means to have lost something close to our hearts, to crumble into darkness, not knowing how to get out.

A model for grieving was formulated by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in 1969, and it includes the following five stages: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance. However, it should be noted that these stages are non-linear, and anyone going through grief can enter any of the other stages at any point and re-enter states that they previously overcame.

As such, grieving can be seen as a continuous process of breaking down and picking ourselves up in different states, like individuals moulting out of their old skin. While the movements are to be played in order, each of the movements lacks a title, allowing listeners to freely interpret the states that are experienced.



CLIFF TAN

Lapis (2022) for Ensemble



I was inspired by Henry Brant's approach with composite instrumentation and fusion of different musical genres in his work Meteor Farm.

There's also a "genreless" movement happening in modern rock now that stems all the way back to the 60's, coming out of the avant-garde to art rock, with notable bands like Glass Beach, John Zorn and Frank Zappa.

In my piece, I'm exploring simultaneity of styles with a mix of classical and rock instruments, just like lapis (Indonesian for 'layers'; popularised by 'kuih lapis', a traditional Indonesian steamed layered sticky rice cake enjoyed in Singapore).

The music is unified harmonically by composite harmonic movement as well as open intervals, 4ths and 5ths. There's a "sound backdrop" of train station sounds throughout the entire piece represented repeated notes and thirds.



# Acknowledgements



## Performers

### Lapis

KOH KAI JIE, *conductor*

WENG YI-CHIAN, *flute*

JOANNE CHAN, *violin*

LIKIE LOW, *erhu*

ANDREN KOH, *piano*

TAY SHU WEN, *piano*

LEE SI YUAN, *double bass*

EUGENE CHEW, *electric bass*

ADAM SHARAWI, *percussion*

### Composition for Electric Guitar and Modular Synthesizer

ABDUL HAKIIM BIN MUHAMMAD HAMIM, *electric guitar*

CHUA ZI TAO, *electronics*

### Exuviations: 5 Dances for Violin, Yangqin and Piano

FOO YUE NING, *violin*

CHEONG CHI YUN ESTENE, *yangqin*

CHUA ZI TAO, *piano*

### Emergence

NEO XUAN LING ELICIA, *violin*

## Special Thanks

ASSOC PROF PETER IVAN EDWARDS

### YST Programming & Productions

TANG I SHYAN

POO LAI FONG

HOWARD NG

MIKE TAN

WAH PENG

ALISON WONG LI EN

### YST Audio Arts & Sciences