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George E. Lewis

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Born in 1952 in Chicago, Ill., USA
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PROJECT

Comet/Poppea and After

For the first part of the academic year, I will complete a 60-minute chamber opera that combines two seemingly disparate sources: "The Comet" (1920), a science fiction short story by W. E. B. Du Bois that combines intimations of a dystopia of extraterrestrial origin with the ongoing dystopia of the US racialized social and political regime; and Monteverdi's "L'incoronazione di Poppea" (1643), the canonical opera of political and sexual intrigue set in ancient Rome. "The Comet" is set in early twentieth-century New York City, where an extraterrestrial event has resulted in the deaths of most of the city's inhabitants, except for Jim, an African American man, and Julia, a white socialite. As this extraordinary event places extreme pressure on established notions of race and place, notions of hybrid vigor attend the self-fashionings of Jim and Julia as a new Adam and Eve.

The combined work, "Comet/Poppea", will be directed by Yuval Sharon and his company, The Industry. Douglas Kearney's libretto is now complete and I have begun composing the music for completion by January 2021, for June 2021 premieres in New York and Los Angeles.

For the second part of the academic year, I will perform primary research on a monograph on critical improvisation studies, a metafield that has exploded in recent years, as my co-edited Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies (2016) amply documents. For this research, I intend to work from my primary bases in music composition, musicology, improvisation, and interactive technology, all areas in which I have published extensively.

Recommended Reading

Lewis, George E. *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Recommended Listening

Lewis, George E. *Afterword* (2015), opera, with libretto by George Lewis. Premiered October 16-17, 2015, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. <https://vimeo.com/148533728>.

- . *The Will To Adorn* (2011), composition for large chamber ensemble. Premiered November 12, 2011, Miller Theatre, New York City. <https://vimeo.com/33061529>.

Where Do Words Go?

In his extraordinary 2003 book, "In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition", Fred Moten quotes the saxophonist Charles Lloyd, who responds to an invitation to comment verbally on his music by assuring his interlocutor that "Words don't go there." In response to Lloyd, theorist (and poet) Moten asks the simple and obvious, yet profound question: "Where do words go?" This is an artist's talk that proceeds rhizomatically to respond to Moten's query by uncovering a set of historical, cultural, poetic, musical, and personal sources and methodologies that underly my use of text and voice in four of my musical works: the radio monologue "Changing With The Times" (1991); "North Star Boogaloo" (1996), for percussion and fixed media; "Anthem" (2011), for voice and instruments; and my opera "Afterword" (2015). Along the way, I will discuss the new creolizing and decolonizing consciousness that is available to contemporary music today.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

external publication list

(https://www.wiko-berlin.de/fileadmin/Dateien_Redakteure/pdf/Externe_Publikationen/George_E_Lewis_publications.pdf)

PUBLICATIONS FROM THE FELLOWS' LIBRARY

Lewis, George E. (Leipzig,2021)

H. narrans : for voice and chamber ensemble ; score

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761962736>

Contemporary

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761962736>

Lewis, George E. ([New York],2021)

The recombinant trilogy

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761931865>

Selections::Instrumental music

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761931865>

Lewis, George E. ([Place of publication not identified],2020)

Rainbow family

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761930508>

Lewis, George E. (Leipzig,2020)

Tales of the traveller : for soloist (any instrument), flute/piccolo, clarinet in B-flat, trumpet in C, electric guitar, electric bass, piano, violin, violoncello, and percussion

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761138197>

Peters contemporary library

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761138197>

Lewis, George E. (Zürich,2020)

A small act of curation

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1749143488>

Lewis, George E. (Leipzig,2019)

Ikons : for flute/alto flute in F, clarinet in B-flat, bassoon/contrabassoon, trombone, violin, violoncello, contrabass, and percussion

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761136046>

Lewis, George E. (Leipzig,2019)

Artificial life 2007 : for felxible ensemble

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761128523>

Artificial life 2007

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761128523>

Lewis, George E. (Chicago, Ill.,2019)

Listening for freedom with Arnold Davidson

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=174914509X>

Lewis, George E. (Leipzig,2018)

The will to adorn : for chamber orchestra

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761139304>

Peters contemporary library

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761139304>

Lewis, George E. (Leipzig,2018)

Memex : for symphony orchestra (2014)

<https://kxp.k10plus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1761138758>