Julio Cortázar
A life in words and musical notes:
A celebration of the 100th anniversary of his birth

Friday, March 21, 2014
Gerald R. Daniel Recital Hall

12:00pm
Laptop Ensemble
Martin Herman, director
Matthew Lourtie, assistant director

4:45pm
Rayuela, The Composition

7:30pm
New Music Ensemble
Adriana Verdié, director
Zachary Kenefick, assistant director

Presented by:
The Bob Cole Conservatory of Music & The Romance, German, Russian Languages and Literatures Department at CSULB
Program
Laptop Ensemble

Martin Herman—director | 12:00pm

Hop ................................................................................................................................. Martin Herman

Materia en gestación ................................................................................................. Adriana Verdié

Zachary Kenefick—saxophone; Eric Pham—laptop/text recitation

Upon Return to Earth ................................................................................................. Seth Shaffer

Matthew Lourtie—laptop/text recitation; Nick Venden—leap motion infrared programming

Program Notes

Hop takes sound fragments of readings from Cortázar’s Rayuela and Autonauts of the Cosmoroute and ‘plays’ them with fragmentary and modular processes similar to how one might approach a reading of Cortázar’s Rayuela. This creates an ambient backdrop of processed reading fragments on which other laptop performers riff. —M.H.

Materia en gestación is based on texts by Argentinean writer Julio Cortázar, including his own voice in counterpoint with a commentary by Cortázar’s favorite instrument, the saxophone, all blended and combined by the process of the four laptops in the ensemble. My sincere thanks to Matt Lourtie for his hard work in programming this piece. —A.V.

Upon Return to Earth touches on the subjects of intimacy and lost love present in Julio Cortázar’s novel, Hopscotch. Fragments of text from Chapter 7 are dissected and reordered in the same spirit of the novel’s formal construction. Wispy electronic sounds materialize, quiver, and melt back into silence. Operating infrared sensors, the performers grasp into empty space, searching for the intangible: the source of lingering affections that remain. —S.S.

Program
Rayuela, The Composition

An interview with composer/saxophonist Miguel Zenón.
Selections from the album Rayuela by Miguel Zenón and Laurent Coq | 4:45pm
Program
New Music Ensemble

Adriana Verdié—director | 7:30pm

Casa tomada ..................................................................................................................... Alona Epshtein

Nirit Rechavi—filmmaker/choreographer; Ziv Appelberg—camera/editing

Convolution ................................................................................................................. Jeffrey Wu

Night Face Up ............................................................................................................ Zachary Kenefick

de ligno scientiae boni et mali .................................................................................... M. H. Ayan Bod

Me caigo y me levanto ............................................................................................... Gilberto Torres

Axolotl .......................................................................................................................... Ben Zucker

The Incredible Story ................................................................................................. Adriana Verdié

El baile de los Famas ................................................................................................. Edna Longoria

Note: All works in tonight’s program have been composed especially for this conference. Most composers are in attendance tonight. Please join them in the foyer after the performance.

Program Notes
Casa tomada The Russian translation of Casa tomada, published in 1979, was accompanied by commentary which was typical of Soviet editions of foreign literature at the time. The text of the story, along with its commentary, has stayed in my mind ever since then. Choreographer Nirit Rechavi and I started to work on Casa tomada two years ago. The piece is named after Cortázar’s novel, but our intention was to tell our own story of invasion. Not only the name, the entire novel is an inspiration for this audio-visual work, while the metaphors of house taken over functions on two semantic levels—as a primary trigger for author’s and audience free associations and as a clue to interpretation of the rather abstract content of the video. I think that any person of any age should have his own “dream-house”—a place to come back, or at least to peep at—is everything still there? Maybe this house was not taken over? The current video and music is our first version of this work and the first part of 40 minutes cycle. —A.E.
Alona Epshtein was born in Baku, Azerbaijan. Now she lives in Israel, but her mother language is Russian. It was almost twenty years ago when she first read Julio Cortázar during their very first years after leaving what was still part of the Soviet Union at the time.

Convolution is based on Blow Up by Julio Cortázar. The story presents the consciousness of a deranged mind through the use of different points of view. It explores what occurs when Michel, the main character, thinks he knows what happens in a picture that he took, but after looking at the blow up of the picture, and going through his own mind for answers, he realizes that he was wrong all along. His insight to his own inability to apprehend the situation, or even his inability to now change the result of the situation (since it has already happened) causes him to lose his confidence in “seeing” the picture. Instead, he replaces the blow up with what he wants to see. Digging into the psyche of the main character, this piece is based on his insight into his own inability to comprehend the situation. —J.W.

Jeffrey Wu is a pianist and a composer, currently finishing his Bachelor of Music with a focus on piano performance and composition at California State University of Long Beach. He has performed frequently in solo recitals in the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music, in chamber recitals with the Clap and Tap Chamber Orchestra in the U.S. and in Taiwan, as well as collaborative works with the CSULB New Music Ensemble. He is currently studying piano with Craig Richey, and composition with Dr. Torres-Santos.

Night Face Up is a strict programmatic representation of the Julio Cortázar’s short story of the same name. The piece utilizes quick poly-stylistic cuts to convey the sense of an altered reality Cortázar so masterfully depicts in the story. The piece is scored for saxophone, violin, and percussion. I have used Ableton Live to process the alto saxophone lines. —Z.K.

Zachary Kenefick is a Long Beach-based performer/composer currently studying at Cal State Long Beach. Zachary has studied saxophone and woodwinds with Val Jamora, James Barrera and Jay Mason, and has studied composition with Dr. Alan Shockley and Dr. Raymond Torres-Santos.

de ligno scientiæ boni et mali is a piece composed based on the hypothetical dialogues between Satan, Adam, and Eve in the Garden of Eden [Genesis 2-3]. The Idea came after reading Axolotl by Julio Cortázar. Axolotl is the story of surrealistic rebirth, mystical metamorphosis, narrow shadow between reality and fantasy, and in a way, evaluating and revaluing of what we call good and evil. Although at first we should redefine those words!

Unlike Cortázar, who starts in the present time and little by little gives us insights about what has happened in the past, I started in the eternal past and sought the same narration through the present or future in order to find out what really happened, or is happening, between Satan, Adam, and Eve. What was the source of power in their metamorphoses, and like the Axolotl, what forces degraded them to come to the earth? And, although this is a very profound question, is it possible that they sought their suffering and indifference, like what happened in Axolotl?

I’ve chosen a flexible medium to work with: instruments capable of showing small changes in sonority and timber to illustrate the process of metamorphosis in the Axolotl. I’ve used many different techniques and include quartertones to achieve a very special sonority required for this piece. In the beginning of the piece, I’ve chosen simple melodies in dialogues between instruments. These dialogues grow and flourish and become more complex in their sonorities, becoming more harsh and chaotic. The sense of bareness here is intentional.

At the end, the “Aztec faces, that are without expressions but of implacable cruelty” come into play by juxtaposing parts together. In my opinion, the metamorphosis of one thing into another, even as degradation, is what all of us encounter during our lives. That is the eternal story of mankind which happens every single second. —M.H.A.B.
M. H. Ayan Bod (b. 1980) is a Persian composer and music educator. He is from a new generation of composers currently completing his Ph.D. in composition under the supervision of legendary Polish composer Maestro Krzysztof Penderecki, in Krakow, Poland. He has won several national and international prizes and his works are regularly performed by different soloists, ensembles and orchestras.

**Me caigo y me levanto**  
Julio Cortázar delights us with an unpublished text *Me Caigo Y Me Levanto* (I Fall and I Get Up) in which he makes us reflect upon the ups and downs we go through on a daily basis. The same can be felt throughout this musical composition. The introduction of the theme expresses the instability that we sometimes find ourselves in and which Cortázar calls a relapse. The melancholic feeling of Argentinian music and Jazz texture is reflected in the composition representing Cortazár’s voice.

As artists and musicians we cannot escape from the instability or relapse. This is the reason why I chose to relive Cortázar’s text through music. In this piece the instability or relapse is expressed in the piano and violin solos. The recoveries from the relapses are expressed with energetic and optimistic melodies played by the violin and cello. At the end of the composition we return to the same introduction to reaffirm that there is nothing for sure in this life and that nobody is exempt from a relapse. —G.T.

Gilberto Torres was born in Caracas, Venezuela where he studied music at the Music Conservatory of Jose Angel Lamas and performed with the world renowned Simon Bolivar Youth Symphony Orchestra (El sistema). He then moved to Cologne, Germany to continue his music studies at the Rheinishe Musikshule. In 1995, he moved to the United States and obtained an Associate's degree with a specialization in Early Childhood Education in Music from Long Beach City College in California. He also holds a double Bachelor's degree in Music Performance and Music Education from the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University of Long Beach. He continues his career as a professional flute player, vocalist, composer, arranger, producer, and music teacher and is also currently working as a music director for the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Youth Orchestra.

**Axolotl**

“There was a time when I thought a great deal about the axolotls. I went to see them in the aquarium at the Jardin des Plantes and stayed for hours watching them, observing their immobility, their faint movements. Now I am an axolotl.” *(Blow-up, and other stories, Pantheon Books 1985)*

*Axolotl* is inspired by the short story by Cortázar of the same name, in which the unnamed narrator, after days upon days of obsessively observing the small, strange creatures which name the story, “becomes” one, in a metamorphosis blending the lines between the physical and psychological. Much literature has been written on this dramatic transformation, as erotic symbolism or ethnographic metaphor, but for me, the simple imagery of the story provided sufficient inspiration and an attractive representational analogy. Cortázar describes in great detail the expressive, elaborate stillness that the axolotls occupy within their tank, while coming to discover the hidden complexities of their actions:

“Obscurely I seemed to understand their secret will, to abolish space and time with an indifferent immobility. I knew better later; the gill contraction, the tentative reckoning of the delicate feet on the stones, the abrupt swimming (some of them swim with a simple undulation of the body) proved to me that they were capable of escaping that mineral lethargy in which they spent whole hours.”

In my work, I attempt to suspend time and space: the former through the use of a very slow tempo and constantly shifting meter, and the latter through a freely-composed meandering ambiguous consonance and dissonance that collapses any tonal architecture. Meanwhile, there is representative punctuation of the axolotl’s movements: short pizzicato notes of gill movement, or languid figures of a limb. This is the gestural world of the strings and vibraphone, which I chose to approach the glassy textures of the water. The saxophone, in the meantime, is the
obsessor. It laments in an expressive musing, but when it meets the world of the strings and vibraphone (the axolotls), the figures become more focused, echoing and following the slightest movements, attempting to match their timelessness and atonality. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, it happens: the saxophone is another moving part in the motionless sound mass of the waters of the composition, it is an axolotl. The instrument has left us, the audience, outside still looking into the tank. —B.Z.

**Ben Zucker** is a composer, improviser, and multi-instrumentalist, who actively situates himself across many musical worlds to study the variety of visceral sonic experiences. Initially self-taught, he currently studies music and critical theory at Wesleyan University, and formerly at Bennington College. A versatile performer, he has performed on vibraphone, piano, brass instruments, and voice with Anthony Braxton, Chanticleer, Tom Scott, Jim Black, and Gerald Cleaver. He has studied composition with Kitty Brazelton, Bruce Williamson, and Anthony Braxton, and has attended the Manifeste Académie at IRCAM, the Stanford Jazz Workshop, and the School For Improvised Music. Currently, he is the coordinator of the Wesleyan Experimental Music Group, and recently was music director for the world premier of Rinde Eckert’s *The Last Days Of The Old Wild Boy*. He resides in Middletown, Connecticut and Lafayette, California.

**The Incredible Story of Cronoplius Famardew and the EspescratchN Hopschestra** as its title suggests, is a collage of ideas and gestures inspired in Julio Cortázar’s characters and stories set to music under the guidelines of Cornelius Cardew’s *Scratch Orchestra Draft Constitution* of 1969, a period also very prolific in Cortázar’s experimental literature. The piece is score for Cronoplius-Conductor and undetermined instrumental ensemble. —A.V.

**Adriana Verdié**’s music has received several awards in the US, Argentina, and Canada. *Los Angeles Times* critic Mark Swed calls her music “compelling and original.” In 2003, Dr. Verdié began teaching theory and composition at CSULB, and in 2013 she started teaching in the Masters in Latin-American Music program at the UNCuyo in Argentina. Also in 2013, the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Institute of International Education’s Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) selected her as a Fulbright Specialist candidate. She has composed several works inspired by Cortázar’s literature, including *Capítulo siete* for mezzo-soprano, alto flute, spoken choir and dancer, *Divertimento* for mixed ensemble, *Materia en Gestación* for saxophone, narrator and laptop ensemble, and her latest work, a children’s chamber *Cron-Ópera*, which will premiere here on April 23, 2014 featuring a cast of BCCM vocalists and the New Music Ensemble.

**El baile de los famas** is based on the title of one of the short stories (The Dance of the Famas) from the book *Cronopios and Famas*, by Argentinian writer Julio Cortázar. Cortázar’s love for Jazz was the main inspiration for this piece, which borrows some of the blues scale pitches, and features “free improvisation” also representative of jazz style. The saxophone is very prominent throughout the piece because of Cortázar’s admiration for bebop saxophonist Charlie Parker. Other Latin music elements are also prevalent throughout the piece. —E.L.

**Edna Alejandra Longoria** is a Master’s student in Composition at the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music. Born in Texas, but raised in Mexico, Edna shares her Latin heritage through her compositions. Aside from writing concert music, she is interested in writing music for film.
Personnel

Laptop Ensemble

Martin Herman—director | Matthew Lourtie—assistant director

Matthew Lourtie—laptop, text recitation
Tim Cummins—laptop
Kaija Hansen—laptop
Zachary Kenefick—laptop, saxophone
Eric Malczewski—laptop
Eric Pham—laptop, text recitation
Kael Sharp—laptop
Gustavo Silveira—laptop
Nick Venden—laptop, leap motion infrared programming

New Music Ensemble

Adriana Verdié—director | Zachary Kenefick—assistant director

Jane Botief—flute
Alex Lee—Saxophone/piano
Scott Dagg—trumpet
Elizabeth Chavez—violin
Kaija Hansen—violin
Josie Boyer—cello
James Clark—Cello
Kevin Sakamoto—percussion
Tyler Hunt—percussion
Jeffrey Wu—piano
Taylor Chan—piano
Eric Pham—speaker
Emanuel Rojas—guest conductor
Denny Bui—guest conductor
Zachary Kenefick—saxophone
Upcoming Events

- **Wed, March 26, 2014:**
  Combined Jazz Concert: Concert Jazz Orchestra, Pacific Standard Time and Elmhurst College Vocal Jazz 8:00pm Daniel Recital Hall FREE

- **Thu, March 27, 2014:**
  Percussion Ensemble, Dave Gerhart, director 8:00pm Daniel Recital Hall $10/7

- **Wed, April 9, 2014:**
  University Wind Quintet, John Barcellona, director 8:00pm Daniel Recital Hall $10/7

- **Fri, April 11, 2014:**
  Saxophone Ensemble, Jay Mason, director 8:00pm Daniel Recital Hall $10/7

- **Fri, April 11, 2014:**
  Opera Institute presents *The Magic Flute*, Johannes Müller-Stosch, conductor 8:00pm University Theatre $25/15

- **Sat, April 12, 2014:**
  Multi-Piano Extravaganza, Shun-Lin Chou, director 4:00pm Daniel Recital Hall $15/10

- **Sat, April 12, 2014:**
  Opera Institute presents *The Magic Flute*, Johannes Müller-Stosch, conductor 2:00pm/8:00pm University Theatre $25/15

- **Sun, April 13, 2014:**
  Opera Institute presents *The Magic Flute*, Johannes Müller-Stosch, conductor 2:00pm University Theatre $25/15