



UCSD's collaborative music- and- art project defies classification

The idea behind UC San Diego's Initiative for Digital Exploration of Arts and Sciences (IDEAS) Performance Series seems simple enough: To encourage artists, musicians, engineers and even scientists to use the university's state-of-the-art Qualcomm Institute space to stage experimental and avantgarde performances. The series takes place throughout the school year, but for one particularly interesting presentation, even one of the main players isn't sure she can fully explain it.

"I'd probably say that it's audiovisual art," says musician and UCSD music composition professor Katharina Rosenberger, describing Immersion Lab (immersivelab.zhdk.ch), which will debut at UCSD on Oct. 9. "There's an audio sound component combined with visual aspects. Both are equally important and influence each other in the creation of the work as well as the perception of it."

As simply put as possible, but still not fully doing it justice: The Immersion Lab is a collaborative project between multiple creators working in a variety of fields. There's a visual element in the form of an enveloping, panoramic room that projects startling digital art all around the viewer. There is the music component, coming in the form of Rosenberger's ethereal and experimental compositions. There's even a cognitive science element to the piece from fellow UCSD professor David Kirsh.

Just as Immersion Lab is a collaborative project, it's the interactivity that's the key to it functioning the way its creators intended.

Yes, there are layers upon layers of collaborative elements that go into the piece (there is also a dozen or so UCSD students developing art projects around the Lab), but what truly separates it from being just another music- and- art installation piece is that it's just

Jan Schacher, who created the Immersion Lab in 2009 with partner Daniel Bisig at the Institute for Computer Music and Sound Technology at Zurich University of the Arts in Switzerland. "Rather, it embraces the visitor in a sensorial and physical space that immediately acts on the senses. It enables direct engagement with the installation, but also fosters the social interaction and explorations within a group in the space."

Schacher and Bisig created Immersion Lab to always be a collaborative project, and Rosenberger agrees that even with all the digital aspects important for the viewer to be involved. When visiting Immersion Lab, four or so people are let into the room and are encouraged to interact with it. The panels that make up the panoramic projection screen are all touch-screen and the music and digital video aspects will react when viewers touch the screens. That is, you're not just immersed in the Immersion Lab, you're reacting, responding and, most importantly, participating in it. Just don't call it virtual reality.

"It's clear that the Immersion Lab does not present a virtual reality- type of immersion," says Schacher. "The human and collective elements of the Lab that make it so unique.

"Virtual reality is something very isolating. We are often alone and the sharing of experiences is kind of limited, but with this, the experience is interactive and it takes into account group interaction. You start to be aware that what you do affects other people too," says Rosenberger. "It's like you want to understand what's going on with this digital being, but you also want to understand the real humans next to you and how they interact with it. That's a really great part of it." ideas.calit2.net

MORE MUSIC

Cathode ray: *Télévision*, the new album by Bang on a Can alumnus and bass player Florent Ghys, is a highly conceptual, yet highly accessible work of avant garde music. Each song is inspired by, and based around, clips of dialogue from television. The French-born, New Jersey-based composer uses the cadence and melody of people to create his compositions, the sound of the voices synchronizing and harmonizing with the music in a fluid whole.

This is just one example of the innovation in Ghys' work, and he'll be bringing that forward-thinking approach to his performance on 7:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 28, at Bread & Salt. \$10-15 freshsoundmusic.com

Saxophone serenade: Memphis-born saxophonist and flautist Charles Lloyd made his breakthrough in 1966 with the release of *Forest Flower*, a live jazz recording at Monterey Jazz Festival in New York, anchored by two adventurous takes on the title track. Yet Lloyd's career spans more than 50 years and seemingly as many different directions, from his avant garde jazz recordings of the '60s to his fusion recordings of the 1970s, and more subdued, third-stream-influenced records of recent years. He's collaborated with everyone from jazz pioneers like Cannonball Adderley to contemporary musicians such as Brad Mehldau. He's one of the greats, and he'll be performing at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 20, at The Auditorium at the Scripps Research Institute. \$30-35 lathenaem.org/jazz-at-tsrj



Spanish magic: Galician violinist Manuel Quiroga likely isn't a name familiar to many, but the early 20th century musician's playing is the stuff of legend. Madrid chamber quartet Cuarteto Quiroga adopted his name upon their formation in 2004, and are keeping Spain's legacy of breathtaking string performances alive with their own unique take on the chamber string ensemble. While they're in San Diego, they'll be hosting a talk at UCSD venue The Loft before their headlining performance. Cuarteto Quiroga will perform at 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 13 at Conrad Prebys Hall at UCSD. \$12-54 artpower.ucsd.edu

Opening at Old Town's Cygnet Theatre at 3 p.m. (Hay Fever) and 8 p.m. (The Vortex) Saturday, Oct. 3. \$34 and up. cygnettheatre.com

The Oldest Boy: One of the theater's most provocative playwrights, Sarah Ruhl (Clean House, Dead Man's Cell Phone) penned this story about two parents torn between the love of their 3-year-old son ("portrayed" by a puppet) and his spiritual destiny. Opening at Downtown's San Diego Repertory Theatre at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 18. \$18-75. sdrep.org