

The Princess of the 9 Cave

[2011] [12:44]

Electronics in "2012 scale."

Anthony Paul Garcia, Marjan Riazzi /

4-hand marimba

Allison Bernal/vocal

I. 4:17

II. 3:02

III. 5:25

IV. Yaxuun

[2005] 7:40

Jeremy Haladyna/piano

V. The Crystal Skull of Lubaantun

[1999] 9:56

Electronics in "Mayascale."

VI. Xunaan Balam (Jaguar Queen)

[2009] 8:00

Sung in Yucatec Maya.

Text traditional Maya.

Allison Bernal/amplified soprano

Jeremy Haladyna/piano

Anthony Paul Garcia, Marjan Riazzi/

duo percussion

VII. Tollan: I.—Place of the Reeds

[2008] 8:20

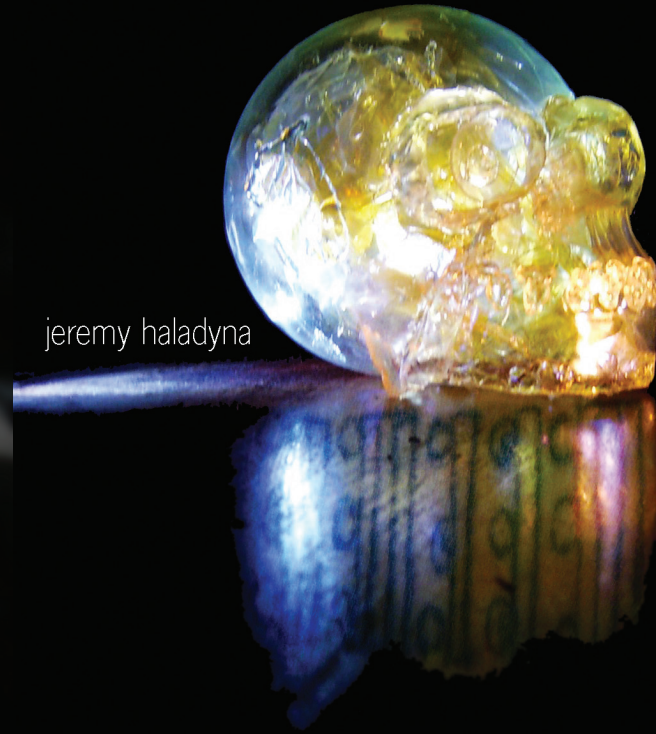
Michele Forrest/oboe

Jeremy Haladyna/organ

VIII. Xtaj (Lust Woman, or, La Llorona)

[2009] 12:14

Jeremy Haladyna/amplified piano with efx



jeremy haladyna

mayan time

mayan tales

I.-III. **The Princess of the 9 Cave** [2011]

12:44

A princess is lowered 15 feet below the floor of a cave, out of the reach of Alvarado, Spanish conquistador. But her Maya subjects above her fall in defeat and there in the darkness she dies. Her spirit survives and transcends, emerging from the cave to inhabit the tree that will give of its wood to the marimbas...the proud Maya marimbas of Guatemala.

[electronic tracks in "2012 scale:" lowest note 3114 B.C., highest note 2012 A.D., scale by Jeremy Haladyna]

This three-movement piece takes place all underground. Its dripping ambience comes from an actual Belizean cave, St. Herman's on the Hummingbird Highway. But Guatemala, not Belize, provides the legend that proved the impetus to its creation.

At the time of the Conquest, Iximche [Quiche, "Kumarcaaj"] was the capital of the Quiche Maya nation. The pending arrival of Pedro de Alvarado during his subjugation of Guatemala had the Maya so full of foreboding that they hid their women and children in a man-made cave under the city. Today, this cave counts nine altars as one progressively descends, presumably to match the nine levels of the Maya underworld.

One Quiche princess was deemed so special that she was secluded in a special cavern underneath the main floor level, some fifteen feet below, which required she be lowered down with ropes. Alvarado, upon arriving, became so suspicious of the situation that he burned the Quiche chiefs at the stake, which broke the national resolve and assured his victory. As for the princess, she died down in the darkness of the cave. But the legend is one of her redemption: her spirit, far from defeated, exits the cave up into the roots of a tree and from there infuses the wood—the very wood from which the first marimbas will be made. And so the Princess and her spirit speak through the music of the Guatemalan marimbas! [source of legend: Ronald Wright: *Time Among the Maya*]

I have long wanted to produce music in a scale that reflects the larger periods of Mayan time in a telescopic way, from the Mayan single year, through the periods of 20, 400 and 5200 ceremonial years. This is that music, made in my new "2012 scale."

Here is a 37-note, non-octaviant system appearing in two versions, with the same intervals building in the one case from the bottom up, and in the other symmetrically from a center point outwards. In either case, the notes at the far extremes represent 3114 B.C. [lowest note, bottom] and 2012 A.D. [highest note, top]. At one point, shortly after

CREDITS

Tracks 4,8 recorded at UCSB Sound Recording, Kerr Hall
Recording and Mastering Engineers: Kevin Kelly, Josh Nelson
Tracks 6, 7 recorded on the stage of Lotte Lehmann Hall, UCSB, 2009-11
Tracks 1-3, 5 realized in Studio Varèse, CREATE, Dept. of Music, UCSB

Editing on this disk is by Jeremy Haladyna, Kevin Kelly and Josh Nelson.
Keyboard technician: David Cesca
Photos of Allison Bernal by Jack Harris.
Transparent skull by artist Steve Newkirk, Ojai, CA.
Source photo of Blue Cotinga (Yaxuun) by David Cahlander.
Additional photos: Antonio Beardall, Preston Wright.
All booklet notes on the works are by the composer.

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ALLISON BERNAL has been the voice pupil of Stephanie Vlahos, Steven Kronauer and Benjamin Brecher and had, at the tender age of 22, the unique pleasure of having an entire musical written for and around her as central character, by a working team of some 15 University of California students. Allison sang the lead role of Laurie in Aaron Copland's *The Tender Land* in a 2011 production, whereas for UCSB's ECM, Bernal sang the world premiere of Darius Milhaud's *Agricultural Machines* in English under Jeremy Haladyna's baton. Josef Woodard reviewed her performance in the Santa Barbara premiere of Haladyna's *Xunaan Balam* in 2010 this way: "unusually sharp and dynamic... singing in Mayan and blessed with a captivating approach—both sensuous and cerebral—to contemporary musical language." Equally at home in modern classical and pop arenas, this versatile and communicative young performer also writes and records her own pop songs.

A native of Chandler, Arizona, composer-percussionist **ANTHONY PAUL GARCIA** has been playing percussion since the age of 14. Anthony has performed in a wide-range of percussion settings: bands, orchestras, percussion ensembles, and a drum corps. He holds a bachelor's degree in music composition from Arizona State University and is pursuing both M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in music composition at the University of California Santa Barbara. There he renders valued service in ECM, the Department of Music's contemporary ensemble.

MARJAN RIAZI is an Environmental Studies student and activist who has served in the percussion ranks for UCSB's ECM since Spring 2009. Also a gifted keyboardist and composer, Summer and Fall 2011 have seen her quickly absorbing the traditions of Ghanaian drumming and African pop, all courtesy of her residency at the UC-EAP Study Centre, University of Ghana.

the vocalist enters for her brief cameo, the two versions of the scale briefly appear superimposed. All the electronic parts, save for the sound effects of an environmental character, appear tuned into scale form A, scale form B, or at once in forms A+B.

The marimba, of course, is not able to alter its tuning to this scale, but...rest easy: no quandary. This is the only one of my three Mayan scales that can cohabitate with equal temperament, there being at least one close cognate for each of the 12 common pitches of our common Western system. I allowed a one-tenth of a tone discrepancy [Mayan scale to Western scale] but no more. And so the marimba music had to be very carefully written to "chime in" on those equal tempered notes that would resonate well with their Mayan note-cousins.

More extensive use of logarithms, yes, proved one important key to solving the math problem of a musical system that could span such huge differences in time-counting units. Everything from a single year to an entire era, the equal of all written history! The big surprise was that the key came by way of a mysterious Mayan time cycle that stands utterly outside those heard here. I'm speaking of the 819-day count, which is the multiple of $7 \times 9 \times 13$.

We're still not entirely sure how this count functioned, but note the number 9 as a principal factor! This is how the nine levels of the cave become salient, built into the very heart and soul of the mathematics you are hearing.

IV. **Yaxuun** [2005]

7:40

The "lovely cotinga" bird is the Yucatecan lowland equivalent to the breathtaking quetzal of the Central American highlands. Both were present at the very dawn of creation, their feathers tightly intermeshed before the advent of the Sun. Will not the Yaxuun be hovering closely and watching now at the close of an era?

The *yaxuun* (Maya) or the *raxóm* (Spanish) is one of the two most sacred birds of the Maya region. Always eclipsed by its rare cousin of the Guatemalan highlands, the quetzal, the lowland *yaxuun* nonetheless exerted a strange power on me during the summer of 2005, mainly as a result of its exotic name, and its presence alongside the Maya from the first moments of their Creation story. The quetzal is emerald green; the *yaxuun* is a captivating and intense turquoise.

This is not an exercise in musical ornithology about the *yaxuun*, or *cotinga amabilis*. Its bird sounds are nowhere imitated here. It's really a sort of secret nocturne for the piano that yields up its truths little by little, truths that begin half-closeted and only explode at the end in a final turquoise ascent in the last minute or so of the piece. This final, stately fanning of the bird's turquoise feathers commences over a low E-flat once the piece's lyrical material has at

last been all assembled and exhausted. The steady rhythm that has been kept out of the piece all along then begins to waft the air quietly as the divine essence of the bird takes ascent.

Whether by instinct or intent, Mayan jungle birds are mysterious, as each visit to the region confirms to me once again. One glimpses them in flashes, flashes which are breathtaking and which subside all too soon into shadows.

V. [The Crystal Skull of Lubaantun](#) [1999]

9:56

The scientists of Hewlett-Packard were baffled and said: "the damn thing shouldn't be." Mysterious images have been seen in the eye sockets; energy is said to transfuse those who hold it closely. Are the crystal skulls supercomputers storing knowledge, and what would knowledge locked in crystal sound like?

[in "Mayascale" by J. Haladyna, with crystal tuned to reflect the numbers in the Mayan year and Mayan almanac]

This piece celebrates one of the world's strangest and most mysterious objects, the famous "Mayan" skull brought to the world's attention in 1927 by F.A. Mitchell-Hedges—explorer, publicist, and teller of tall Central American tales. It bears an uncanny resemblance to certain authentic pre-Columbian skulls, yet it was "found" in an area (Lubaantun, southern Belize) to which rock crystal is not native. Partly for that reason, Arthur C. Clarke believes it to be a fake. If real, how did the Maya sculpt it without metal tools? For many years, before high-powered microscopes were brought to bear, examiners found absolutely no sign of metal toolworking. It is a miraculous piece of high art, complete with detachable lower jaw and two small holes that may have been used to support it as it "spoke" and delivered incontrovertible oracles.

This piece is created entirely from the sound of glass crystal, including "water-glass" harmonica and the sound of a glass rod striking glass. The pitch system is microtonal in a scale focusing on the Maya year and the Maya sacred almanac. In compass, this scale takes two octaves, not one, to come round to the same note and combines a 13-division of this 2-octave space with an (approximate) 18-division of the 2-octave space. This is very similar to how the Mayan calendar works, with its perpetually turning wheels of both 260 (13x20) and 360 (18x20) days. Their 260-day period we might term an *almanac* today, since it was used to foretell propitious days on which to plant crops, etc., not unlike *Poor Richard's*!

[Dr. JEREMY HALADYNA's *Mayan Cycle*](#) of musical pieces is receiving recognition due the highly unusual:

"All in all...a very thoroughly conceived sonic universe....The results are simply fascinating."

--Frank J. Oteri, senior editor, [newmusicbox.org](#)

"Potently atmospheric stuff." --Rob Barnett, [musicweb-international.com](#)

Nine trips to the Mayan region and an investigation of more than 25 years into Pre-Columbian thought have indelibly marked and changed the work of this U.S.-born composer. Haladyna's *Mayan Cycle* now stretches to 29 pieces, including such titles as *Zaquico'xol*, *El Llanto de Izamal*, *The Maya Curse Pedro de Alvarado*, *Pok-ta-Pok, 2012*, *The Oracle of 13 Sky, Copal*, and the *Jaguar Poems*.

Haladyna, Director of UC Santa Barbara's *Ensemble for Contemporary Music*, holds prizes and academic qualifications from three countries. A laureate of the Lili Boulanger Prize and diplômé of the history-rich Schola Cantorum at Paris' Left Bank, he also holds advanced degrees from the University of Surrey (U.K.) and the University of California. He has taught undergraduate composition at UCSB since 1991, and was named to its permanent faculty in March, 2000. His own past teachers include William Kraft, Karl Korte, Eugene Kurtz, Jacques Charpentier, and Joseph Schwantner.

In addition to active performing, Jeremy teaches orchestration and is a senior faculty member of the College of Creative Studies, UCSB. As pianist, composer, conductor and organist, he has long been committed to the espousal of new music. His own music has been heard at Carnegie (Weill) Hall; King's College, London; St. John's Smith Square, London; South Bank Centre, London; the Monday Evening Concerts, Los Angeles; St. Paul's Cathedral, London; All Saints Church, London; BMIC, London; and the National Museum of Art, Mexico City. In December 1999 he premiered his *The Vision Serpent* at the Chopin Academy, Warsaw during a guest residency, also lecturing on the *Mayan Cycle*. In October, 2000 he was invited to present excerpts from the cycle as the subject of a colloquium at Kings College, London. In 2009 "Mayan Cycle" elements were brought to concerts in Istanbul, Turkey as part of a composer-conductor residency at MIAM. In 2009 an integral album release entirely from the "Mayan Cycle" appeared on innova.

DOUBLE HOUSE...
WHERE SHE IS CIRCLING, TOO;
MY JAGUAR QUEEN, MY JAGUAR QUEEN.

O SURROUND ME NOW, I PRAY,
O LADY JAGUAR QUEEN.

YOU, PROTECTOR OF THE LAND...
ENCIRCLE US,
MY LADY.

O SURROUND ME NOW, I PRAY,
BE AROUND ME AS I TURN,
COME ENVELOP ME KNEELING,
AS I OFFER PRAYER HERE,
WITH MY TEARS I CALL HERE.

I INVOKE YOU TURNING ROUND—
TO EASTERN WINDS I TURN.
TO THE NORTHERN WINDS,
SOUTHERN WIND.
O SURROUND ME NOW I PRAY
MY LADY.

I AM PRAYING TO YOU, KEEPER OF THE GOOD LANDS,
TO EASTERN WINDS I TURN.
I INVOKE YOU TURNING ROUND,
SURROUND ME, LORD NORTHERN WIND.

SWIRLING WINDS I CALL.
WORTHY WINDS IN CAVES I CALL.
MEETING PLACE WINDS I CALL,
WINDS BY THE ROADS I CALL.

WORTHY WINDS OF FORESTS,
WORTHY BARNYARD WIND.
O SURROUND ME NOW, I PRAY,
MY LADY.

BE AROUND ME AS I TURN,
COME ENVELOP ME KNEELING,
YOU, LORD OF THE WESTERN WINDS,
TRICKSTER WIND,
JAGUAR WINDS I CALL.
LEADING WINDS I CALL,
BITING WINDS I CALL,
TRIUNE WINDS I SUMMON.
O SURROUND ME NOW I PRAY,
XUNAAN BALAM.

COME ENVELOP ME AS I KNEELING TURN
TO THE SOUTHERN WIND,
FIRST-BORN OFFSPRING WINDS,
MIDDLE-BORN OFFSPRING WINDS,
LAST-BORN OFFSPRING WINDS,
CARETAKER OF THE RAINS,
PROTECTOR OF THE GOOD LANDS.

I INVOKE YOU THIS DAY, LADY JAGUAR,
XUNAAN BALAM.
MONARCH AND SPIRIT,
MY LADY.

I IMPORE YOU BY GOD THE FATHER
GOD OUR SAVIOR,
GOD WHO IS SANCTIFIED SPIRIT.

VI. *Xunaan Balam (Jaguar Queen)* [2009]

8:00

The Waajil Kool is akin to Thanksgiving in the Yucatán: a ceremony full of appreciation for a good harvest. But part of it involves the summoning of “Lady Jaguar” in the company of all the winds—a full catalog of swirling winds from every conceivable quarter. Lady Jaguar is like a queen of the motion spirits, and in the end, a spirited tri-fold benediction aligns her with the Catholic Mother Mary as well.

The text of *Xunaan Balam* shows the Maya’s absorbing tendency in the colonial and later periods to unite pre-Columbian imagery with the Catholic tradition. Its “Lady Jaguar” references reach all the way back to the Olmec and their half-human, half-jaguar totem gods, discussed most fully by the Mexican scholar Ignacio Bernal. The Maya were among those later races who carried over much of this Olmec jaguar lore and legend.

This traditional text forms only a portion of the *Waajil Kool* ceremony [trans.: “First Fruits of the Cornfield”]. The entire ceremony connotes thanksgiving for a good harvest, which accounts for the positive overall tone, if not the mystery of this invocation of the jaguar spirit in the company of winds. Jaguars really do “cough” to announce a presence—that is no fantasy on the part of writers of jungle fiction. Yet to the Maya their spiritual presence as “spirit companions” was all too real and necessary. There is emphatic urgency here to the shaman’s appeals that Lady Jaguar “take the stage.” When she does, a palpable nervous tension obtains—and indeed, she “coughs.”

This traditional *oración* in Yucatec Maya traces back to a real shaman in Mexico’s central Yucatán. The English version printed here is my own and may be substituted for the Maya in performance. There is a highly surprising textual close—a Spanish benediction! This has an electric effect in jolting to a close the circular, revolving Maya-language lines, and bears further witness to the 2 cultures coexisting in the same mindset, the same spiritual space.

This piece was written in 2009 for Allison Bernal, who sings it here.

VII. *Tollan: I.—Place of the Reeds* [2008]

8:20

Lost to history, Tollan was revered as the place of origin for all the great cultures of Mesoamerica. Was it Teotihuacan? Was it Tula? All we know is that it was “a place of reeds” where the tribal lineages were cemented and consecrated, before all the races scattered to parts hither and yon. For the Maya, it was “Puh.”

In 2008 I could no longer resist attempting a piece for the raspy reed stops of our University organ, allied to the Mesoamerican concept of Tollan, “Place of the Reeds.” The addition of an oboe would make the reed metaphor more salient still. In this case, the Mayan name for this reedy place, *Puh*, is neither as comely nor as universally recognized as the Nahuatl one. But though names might differ, all the peoples of the region revered this same fuzzy locale. Why? The answer: Tollan was the birthplace of prehistory, the place that furnished the patron gods, the divine ancestors whose beneficence smiled on the ancient urban centers of Central America.

But if we really would find the first—and authentic—“Place of the Reeds,” it would be the Olmecs, shrouded in mystery, who would likely write the map, taking us into their marshy homelands of Gulf Coastal Mexico. This early proto-culture is only now yielding its secrets to scholars, and these included the gifts of the calendar and writing system to the Maya and all the great following central cultures. Their mystique, hidden behind reeds, is their strange obsession with were-jaguars—(compare: were-wolves)—and the snake cult.

One summer recently, my carefully laid plan to revisit the Maya region having been blown into tatters by a hurricane, I went looking for Tollan. For we have a United States Tollan, a place so ancient that it speaks mutely of human occupation too early for any writing system, and thus is only distantly echoed in Paiute Indian legend. Nevada’s ancient Lake Lahontan is nearly dry now, but small pockets of lakeshore still remain, surrounded by priceless caves that have yielded human remains impossibly old.

Near Pyramid Lake and Spirit Cave, I found what I was looking for, and more. I was shown ancient skulls from the “place of the reeds” hidden away in kitchen cabinets. In just a few days, I fell smack into a disturbing and suppressed “X-files” world of archeology that I never imagined could exist. But it does.

VIII. *Xtaj* (Lust Woman, or, La Llorona) [2009]

12:14

It is Mayanist Dennis Tedlock who connects Xtaj [Lust Woman] with the “Weeping Woman” so feared in the mestizo world. Xtaj would have seduced Tohil, the Mayan Prometheus, on a riverbank, distracting him from striking his bargain with mankind [fire for sacrificial blood]. But Tohil is not fooled, and the distracted Xtaj is left to wander rural Guatemala at night, targeting young men who, like Tohil, are in full virility, striking them dead on the very doorstep of marriage!

Hispanic-Americans are familiar with the terror of *La Llorona*, and the Maya also have their version of the story. Uniquely appalling, she is as feared by residents of San Antonio, Texas as by highland Guatemalans. In the classic

mestizo version of the story, she is an attractive young woman of low-class origins. A high-born gentleman with wandering eyes takes notice of her, lures her into an affair, and has 2 children by her. To him and these progeny she is utterly devoted.

Then the woman is startled to hear that her high-born lover is about to wed a woman of a similarly high caste from outside the immediate country. She cannot believe it but soon the truth becomes undeniable. In a fit of rage and madness she drowns the two children of their union in the river, then at once regrets this to the very core of her being. She jumps in after them and perishes, but her predatory spirit, never quiet, survives to stalk in the night.

In the Maya version it is someone in a myth who goes insane—Xtaj [Lust Woman], one of two voluptuous girls charged with derouting the “Mayan Prometheus,” Tohil. [Tohil gives mankind as much as does Prometheus, except that Tohil demands human blood in return.] Tohil does not fall for the ploy of the naked girl set to beguile him beside the river. Xtaj and her companion, failures in the charge given to them by divine conspirators, turn into distracted and lascivious predators doomed to haunt the forests forever. There are no drowned children in the Maya version, only mortified young men innocently perishing, denied their brides forever.

English translation, *XUNAAN BALAM* [Jaguar Queen]

Text traditional Maya, from the whole of the *Waa'jil Kool* ceremony celebrating a good harvest. It is a shaman [h'men] who here recites and invokes Lady Jaguar [Jaguar Queen].

This English version by the composer is metricized and can be opted for in performance.