



*Be melting snow,
wash yourself of yourself*

Jacob David Sudol
Portrait Concert

September 5th / 7:00 PM
Holsclaw Hall

Program

Unravelling... (2018), for solo piano 11'

"Be melting snow..." (2025), for piano and live electronics ~40'

"...wash yourself of yourself" (2011), for piano and live electronics ~30'

Composition / Live Electronics: Jacob David Sudol
Piano: Chen-Hui Jen



Jacob David Sudol

Composer / Computer Musician

About

Jacob David Sudol uses new technologies to create intimate compositions that explore enigmatic phenomena, the inner nature of how we perceive sound, as well as novel connections between Eastern and Western musical cultures. His music has been performed over 200 times by many prestigious ensembles and performers across North America, East and Southeast Asia, and Europe. In addition, a chapter that Dr. Sudol wrote on his music, "Personal Examples of Sounds and Spectra as Symbols" is published in the Oxford University Press Handbook of Spectral Music.

In 2012, he founded a cello/electro-acoustic duo with his colleague the distinguished cellist Jason Calloway and, since 2010 he has been in the Misty Shore Duo, a piano/electro-acoustic duo with his wife Chen-Hui Jen. He has also worked as a recording engineer and producer for albums released on Mode, Albany, Bridge, MSR, Metier, Centaur, and Neuma Records.

Dr. Sudol is currently an Associate Professor of Music Technology and Composition at Florida International University and Coordinator of the Music Technology Area, where he was also awarded a Faculty Award for Research and Creative Activities in 2016. He also was awarded a 2015-16 Fulbright Fellowship to research and teach in Taiwan.

<http://www.jacobsudol.com/> <https://soundcloud.com/jacob-david-sudol>

In my music I strive to create unique and intimate situations where listeners can experience the inner nature of sound, space, and time, as well as the dynamic ways in which our minds engage these interconnected musical features. To do this, I often reduce my music to more elemental materials so that common musical features such as melody, harmony, or rhythm will not distract the audience from the sort of experiences I wish to present. My hope is that one can come away from hearing my music with new and changed ways of understanding how we exist with sound, space, and time.

- Jacob David Sudol

Unravelling... (2018)

While writing threads unraveling... for piano and live electronics I realized that the piano part could possibly work as an independent composition. With this in mind, I made some modifications to the finished piano part of threads unraveling... to complete unraveling... The piano writing in unraveling... is primarily based on spectral analyses of two Tibetan singing bowls and one tingsha that I have used in over half a dozen works. As a whole unraveling... focuses less on melody, harmony, or even timbre than it acts as a meditation on how material and memory can progressively unravel and rewrite themselves. This piece was written for my frequent collaborator and lovely wife, Chen-Hui Jen.

August 5, 2014
Kaohsiung, Taiwan

“Be melting snow...” (2024-25)

Taken as two halves of a couplet by the Sufi mystic poet and teacher Rumi, “Be melting snow...” for piano, MIDI keyboard, and live electronics functions as both a complement and contrast to its pairing work “...wash yourself of yourself.” Whereas the latter primarily relies on an improvisational structural framework, the sounds in “Be melting snow...” are more specifically structured and notated. Whereas the latter work presents a greater range of musical densities – moving from a single tolling tone to a loud virtual torrent of notes, “Be melting snow...” is generally more restrained and almost crystalline, not unlike the structure of a single slowly melting snowflake. Despite these differences, the two works both reflect different attempts to use formal processes to remove unintentional mannerisms from my music.

I wrote “Be melting snow...” to be mainly paired with “...wash yourself of yourself” in contexts where the two could be presented together as a full concert. My hope is that the contrasts and similarities of the two works will aid the listener to reflect on all our own interconnectivity within the world and universe that we exist.

May 21, 2025

“...wash yourself of yourself” (2008-10, 2014-15)

“...wash yourself of yourself” incorporates two electronic techniques that I initially developed between 2008 and 2010 and later refined in 2014 and 2015. One technique uses real-time spectral analysis to create timbres with subtractive and additive synthesis. These timbres imitate the original sounds as well as the combination tones our brains create when hearing these sounds. The other technique uses real-time spectral analyses to create statistically transforming clouds of microtonal samples. As is the case of my recent piano works, the samples used to create these clouds are also piano sounds. Both of these techniques aim to provide the listener with methods to explore his, her, or their own listening.

“...wash yourself of yourself” presents these techniques in an open and structured improvisational manner. The title comes from the following couplet by the Sufi mystic poet and teacher Rumi – “Be melting snow, wash yourself of yourself.” Following this, the work reflects an attempt to totally formalize and remove any unintentional mannerisms from my music.

The work as well “Be melting snow...” both written for and dedicated to my lovely wife.
January 29, 2017