

Contemporary Players Artist Chats

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This is Artist Chats brought to you by San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. You'll hear contemporary music's most inspired personalities share insight into their art, their life, and their upcoming performance with the Contemporary Music Players.

Season 1 Episode 3

Yesterday Night: the Composer's Perspective

Artistic Director Eric Dudley speaks with composer DeVanté Winn about his new work for oboe and electronics.

Eric Dudley: We're now joined by DeVanté Winn, who is another student in the Technology and Applied Composition Program at SF Conservatory and also composer of the next piece in our program which is called, *Yesterday Night* for oboe and electronics. And DeVanté welcome, thanks so much for joining us.

DeVanté Winn: Yeah, thanks for having me, it's good to be here.

Eric: Yeah, um tell us a little about yourself, where you come from and how did the music bug bite you first.

DeVanté: *(laughs)* yeah so, I'm originally from California, I've travelled all over the world, my dad was in the Air Force so we moved in multiple different countries (**Eric:** Oh, wow) I enlisted in the Army and so I wasn't out of the country but I was in DC for my time. As far as the music bug, if you ask my grandma, she'll tell you that it started when she took me to see *Lion King* when it premiered and I was two-years old *(laughs)* but I think from then on, yeah, music really followed me and it kinda came to a head when I was actually in Japan and my mom got a clarinet and she was playing it for me and I was just so blown away like, *I have to learn this instrument*, and so once we got back to the States and I was able to join a band program at the school I did that immediately and it just really took off from there.

Eric: So then, what about composition then, when, when did that start for you?

DeVanté: Oh, that started in high school after the movie *Up* came out (**Eric:** oh nice!) yeah, yeah, that was a real, that was a real breakthrough because everyone was talking about the music and like, that first scene where there was no dialog, just music and how it touched

everyone is like, that's what I'm after in music, that's what, that's what I want to bring, I don't usually write for electronics, so this is kind of some of my first attempts to it.

Eric: Talk to us a bit about that then, the electronic aspect. What is it that you're mainly using to create the electronic environment and the (**DeVanté:** mmhm) and what's the sound that you're after?

DeVanté: So I was really after a very spacious sound because in this piece has a lot of long-held notes um, just to give you a nice atmosphere and I wanted the electronics to represent what I was hearing in my head as effectively as I could and I think, I think, I've got it pretty much but it was also really difficult because I write with notation, so I had to figure out a way to notate the electronics into my score and because electronics changed in timbre and everything I had to figure out how write it correctly, but it was a fun challenge, yeah, it was very welcome.

Eric: That's great, so it actually like, stretched your notational practices a little bit.

DeVanté: right, right, yeah.

Eric: And what about the title, *Yesterday Night*, what is, what is the meaning for you (**DeVanté:** *laugh*) Or is that something you want to share with us?

DeVanté: Yeah, yeah, I can, I can, um, so around this time last year, I went to the lighthouse in San Francisco, I don't remember the name of it, but like, there's this lighthouse and when you get there, it's um; the sky is very clear you can just see every single star, more stars probably I've seen in my life, and that just always really stuck with me and so this is kind of a reminiscent on that time where I just was out there in the freezing cold night (*laugh*) on Valentine's Day looking up at the stars and it was just a beautiful sight to behold.

Eric: Fantastic, well we're going to try to envision the same thing as we hear it. (**DeVanté** *laughs*) We're really I'm really looking forward to hearing your piece for the first time.

DeVanté: Yes, Thank you thank you.

Eric: Yeah, Thanks for being with us.