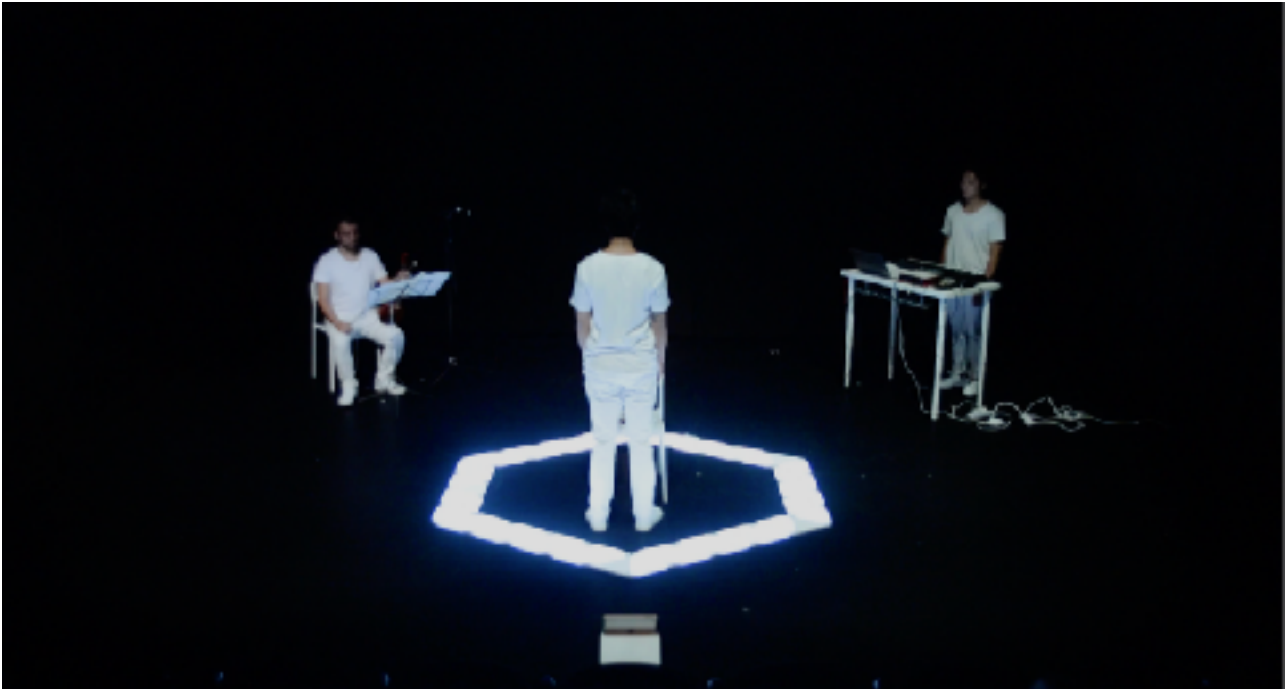


NEVER SEEN
JAMAI S VU
/ '3ÆMEI 'VU: /



There were terrifying, sudden moments when objects, concepts and even people that the chaplain had lived with almost all his life inexplicably took on an unfamiliar and irregular aspect that he had never seen before and which made them seem totally strange: *jamaïs vu*

-Catch 22



NEVER SEEN

PROJECT BRIEF

It's not mind-numbing. It's alarming.

We assume you will sit back and keep silent to it.

The speech is meaningless. The progression will not come no matter how much you pray. People are still proud of how good they can differentiate the colours. The relationships are getting worse again. Similar sentiments are rising. A sudden change in mood will trigger an outbreak. It does not come with warning.

Can you recognize the pattern? Are they identical? Probably, the events do not repeat themselves, but they simply rhyme. We will repeat it until you learn from it.

A brainchild of contemporary composer and musician Alain Chiu, award-winning actor and vocal Chu Pak-hong and experimental violinist Eric Chan, *Never Seen* is a musical reincarnation not merely for appreciation but reflection. "We want to address the question that what 'repetition' means to you."

DESCRIPTION

Never Seen is an experiment that investigates how “repetition” can change the audience’s experience with music and language. It explores on how speech and words can be used as a musical input, and how such interwork can provide a foundation for a non-narrative, dramatic musical performance.

Cantonese is to be chosen as the language of this experiment. One of the most intrinsic characters of this language is its melodic intonation and inflection. Such character when combined with traditional compositional technique, will provide a solid platform to explore on the usage of Cantonese language in a western musical context.

BACKGROUND

The French term *Jamais Vu*, loosely translated to English as "never seen," is a psychological and cognitive phenomenon. Contrary to *Deja Vu*, the *Jamais Vu* effect takes place when one senses a puzzlement of unaccountable unfamiliarity, usually when a person can vaguely recognises some changes without being able to characterise the nature of the change more closely.

Semantic satiation, while closely related to *Jamais Vu*, describes the sensation of the desensitisation or involuntary connotative metamorphoses to the original meaning of words, characters and other auditory triggers when exposed to it repeatedly over a period of time.

The transformation of meaning over time and the sense of amazement one feels during a *Jamais Vu* episode is basis of this project. Such occurrences are artistically intriguing but it also provides a glimpse into how the mind works. n for a non-narrative, dramatic musical performance.





ARTISTIC INVESTIGATIONS

- To investigate the use of speech as a musical element. Doing so by examining closely its inflections and pronunciation nuances.
- Experiment on psychological phenomenons: Jamais Vu and Semantic Satiation. By reproducing such effect with a combination of music and speech, it provides an opportunity to investigate on how repetition can change the audience's experience and if the temporal cognitive transformation can be used as an artistic device.
- Explore the relativity of time: the sense of time perceived by the performers versus the audience. ever Seen is an experiment that investigates how "repetition" can change the audience's experience with music and language. It explores on how speech and words can be used as a musical input, and how such interwork can provide a foundation for a non-narrative, dramatic musical performance.

PROJECT DETAILS

GENERAL

Audiences are invited to explore a musical reincarnation of a language of which they may not be capable to understand. Instead of using Cantonese language solely as a way to deliver meaning and emotions, the “speech” of the vocal / actor is used as a musical input by examining closely its inflections and pronunciation nuances.

Never Seen features violin, percussions, piano (with audio processes) and acting. Music is transcribed based on the pitches and rhythm of the speaker’s monologue, while live electronics manipulates the sound through looping, echoing and amplification. Dramatic elements take shape as the music and speech unfolds thus creating a multifaceted, sonic-drama driven performance.

Artistically, performers are to neglect normative “react and respond” tendency that is often practised in performing arts. Instead, they are instructed to focus on executing pre-determined “tasks” within a specific timeframe.

TEXT AND STRUCTURE

Text chosen is the Cantonese translation of the *Seven basic proposition* of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. In the first and second section, Speaker will recite and repeat each of the proposition based on a predetermined direction. Specific tasks will be given and each performers is to repeat the task within a specific timeframe. Such repetition will carry on more vigorously until “text” is reduced to short words and syllables.

In the second section that follows immediately, speaker will read text written by Alain Chiu. This monologue is constructed based on the words, syllables and pronunciations of the *seven basic propositions*. Violin and Piano follows exactly the speed, rhythm and pitch of the speaker and the text.

EXPECTED AUDIENCES PERCEPTION

The project aims to push the boundaries between music and other disciplines, such as media, acting and physical movement. The creative team is formed by composer, theatre director, actor and musicians. The musician is no longer playing the music only. The role of the actor and the musicians will interchange during the working process and the performance.

In the performance, the composition technique such as repetitions and interlacing counterpoint will be used. When a specific speech and music bar are both repeatedly “played” in front of the audience, together with the choreography of media, acting (in voice and expression) and physical movement, the audience will experience the effect of, either a semantic satiation caused by the repeated oral pronunciation of a word resulting in a sudden lost of its connotative meaning; or a fanciful interpretation of the piece based on the audience’s subjective translation from the interdisciplinary signs



PRODUCTION DETAILS FOR ADELAIDE FRINGE FESTIVAL PREMIERE



PERSONNEL

Producer: Jacqueline Wong, Trilateral Lab
 Composer, Director, Keyboard: Alain Chiu
 Speech/Voice: Chu Pak-hong
 Violin: Eric Chan
 Sound Engineer: Jaycee Kwok
 Lighting Designer: Zoe Cheung
 Videographer:

AUDIO REQUIREMENTS

Stage Piano (Nord Piano 2 or similar)
 Laptop with Logic Pro X 10.3
 Audio Interface with 4 XLR inputs, 6 outputs
 Microphone Preamplifiers
 Stereo Microphones (2)
 Wireless Microphone
 Cassette Tape Player
 Auto-looping Cassette tape (15 sec)

EXTRA LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS

Nanoleaf Aurora LED Lighting Panels (50)
 Nanoleaf Connecting Stripes and Accessories
 Incandescent Light Bulb with Dimmer

**It's not mind-numbing.
It's alarming.**

Created & Performed by

Alain Chiu
(digital music)

Chu Pak-Hong
audio/visual artist
(vocal/speech)

Eric Chan
(violin)

Facebook:
C'Day Hoag King at
Adelaide Fringe Festival 2011

Bakehouse Theatre

255 RYLAND STREET, ADELAIDE 5000, SA
www.bakehousetheatre.com

Feb 13 - 25, 9pm

(dark night on Feb 19)
Preview from Feb 13 to 16

\$20 - \$28

* ADELAIDE
FRINGE **FringeTIX**
adelaidefringe.com.au 1300 621 355

"Creative use of speech and language as
 a musical element. Dedicated artists--
 ready for going beyond the limitations."
 King Chiu-hong
 (interviewed on 17/06/2011)

PROJECT TIMELINE

PROJECT TIMELINE

The creative experimentation is a further development of a former project created by the same team in early 2016. The project will be divided into two stages: the goal of the 1st stage is to find solutions of combining speech and music in a sonic-drama driven performance while exploring the possibility of utilising speech as a musical element. Stage 1 of the project will conclude with the showing at the Adelaide Fringe Festival.

In collaboration with Connecting Space Hong Kong, A new adaption of Never Seen was recorded using VR binaural technology. This portion of the experiment will focus on the spatiality of recorded sound and the possibility of VR as an artistic medium.

The 2nd stage is dedicated to evaluating the outcome of the show, with the aim to produce a new full-length performance by mid 2018. A showcase in Hong Kong will be scheduled in later 2017 to gather public feedback and interest. The ongoing experiment will incorporate a more matured and substantial musical setup, more intricate multimedia involvement as well as exploring advance midi and motion sensing technology.

2016

April

Still Life Showcase

“Still Life,” a study on the relationship between Cantonese speech and music. Performed to 100 audiences at the HKJC Street Music Experimental Music Series.

Sept - Dec

Workshop, Experiment

Experiment, discussion and workshop

2017

Jan - Feb

Rehearsal, Open -studio Showcase

LCSD Oi! PerformingArts Series open rehearsal Preparation for **Adelaide Fringe Festival**.

Feb 13 - 25

Never Seen Premiered

Premiere at **Adelaide Fringe Festival 2017**.

Mar

Transience Premiered

New work **Transience**, a Virtual reality (VR) experimentation based on **Never Seen**, premiered in Hong Kong. In collaboration with Connecting Spaces Hong Kong and Nicolas Buchi

2018

Early - mid

Never Seen Hong Kong Premiere

A Hong Kong premiere is in the plans. Currently looking for creative partners



FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

TRANSCIENCE (2017)

Transcience, a virtual reality video based on the idea of Never Seen was released in March 2017. It has been featured and shown in B3 Biennale in Frankfurt, Geneva Film Festival, Boston Film Festival and Hong Kong.

HONG KONG PREMIERE (MID 2018)

A Hong Kong premiere of Never Seen is being developed and is currently looking for sponsors and artistic partners.

ENTANGLEMENT (PROJECT TITLE, 2018-19)

In Entanglement, the team will continue to explore the idea of relativity of time, repetition, jamais vu and semantic satiation.

Entanglement is a series of work consists of 3 parts: a mobile app, a VR video and a full-length musical theatre production.

REVIEWS

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

STEPHEN WHITTINGTON
THE ADVERTISER (AU)

CONCEPTUALLY brilliant and superbly performed, *Never Seen* by Hong Kong group Trilateral Lab is experimental but not inaccessible.

Wittgenstein in Cantonese may seem likely an unlikely proposition, but as the founder of linguistic philosophy, Wittgenstein is the perfect choice for a work about the borderline between speech and music.

Composer Alain Chiu, on keyboard and laptop, and violinist Eric Chan play melodies that mimic the six tones of Cantonese, following the words uttered by actor and vocalist Chu Pak-hong.

This simple concept steadily evolves into something complex and mesmerising. It doesn't matter if you can't understand the words; repetition ultimately obliterates semantics and words dissolve into pure sound.

I won't spoil the conclusion – but it is stunning. You're given an English translation when you leave, and suddenly it all makes sense, or transcends sense.

For the musically adventurous this show is highly recommended.

THE RUE THEATRE (UK)

This time, I am speechless - and I think that was exactly the point *Never Seen* by Trilateral Lab was trying to make. What is there when we don't say something or what does repetition mean to us? In a futuristic, dystopian setting, the speech merges into one with sounds and music and it is a way of communicating we are not accustomed to. I was constantly trying to understand, and therefore is it not only challenging it is also frustrating. And exactly that frustration and the endless control by the performers, made *Never Seen* so interesting and powerful. You challenge yourself watching it, but nevertheless you get drawn in by the sounds and the musical language. You become part of an experimental performance, that lays beautifully in between performance art, music and theatre.

If you like experimental stuff, I'd highly recommend it!



MATT INNES: SCENESTR (AU) NEVER SEEN: A MUST-SEE AT ADELAIDE FRINGE

Contemporary Hong Kong composer, Alain Chiu, will present the world premiere of his new, musical-performance piece at this year's Adelaide Fringe, a bold, creative vision entitled 'Never Seen'.

"'Never Seen' is actually a straight translation of a French phrase called *jamais vu*," Alain explains. "It's a psychological phenomenon where maybe you wake up to a loved one in your bed but you don't recognise the person, so that real out-of-body experience."

Jamais vu is essentially the opposite of *déjà vu*, described as the sensation of encountering a familiar situation for the very first time. In 'Never Seen', Alain, along with vocalist Chu Pak-hong and violinist Eric Chan, attempt to recreate this phenomenon through a minimalist composition of repeating text and musical phrases. "Basically we try to repeat a lot of things in 45 minutes," Alain says.

"The musical materials are not extravagant; they're very simple and based on seven, short phrases in Cantonese. In the span of 45 minutes we try to repeat with different methods, such as loopers and different methods of delivering text, or switching instruments.

"Through repetition and cycles we hope to recreate that feeling of using the whole thing over and over again, but at the same time trying to find your own patterns. We invite the audience to experience that method by interpreting what the music is about.

"We don't explain expressly what the words mean or what the music means, but we invite them to find it out themselves."

The concept of repetition and cycles has played a significant role in Alain's work, with the idea of 'Never Seen' originating in a previous composition and becoming something Alain wanted to explore more deeply as a composer. "The whole concept is based on an opera I wrote in Cantonese," he says.

"That was two years ago, and after the opera I told myself it's something I should really explore. So it took me two years to actually create this piece, but this is a really new concept to put it on the stage.

"So it's an experiment, but also an experience; it's an ongoing process. I'm very excited about it because it's the first time we've put this concept to test. We're excited and scared, but at the same time we look forward to it very much. We tell the audience 'don't expect anything, just come in and experience the music'."

The premiere of 'Never Seen' is part of an event on the **Frusic programme** called 'G'day Hong Kong' that is the first, interdisciplinary showcase of Hong Kong talent at Fringe. "It'll be really exciting because this time the whole performance will be based on a text in Cantonese, which is a local dialect in Hong Kong," Alain says.

"There are political issues about the dialect because some people try to crackdown on it, try to replace it with Mandarin. As artists in Hong Kong, we try really hard to preserve the dialect and local culture.

"So it's really nice to have a chance to bring the show outside of Hong Kong and show it to other people."

AUDIENCES' FEEDBACK

"Thank you so much for a really beautiful experience of sound, music, language and indulging in the sensitivities of the unknown."

"I have never seen anything like it. I understand now how repetition can be interpreted in music."

"Very talented performance. I enjoyed closing my eyes and letting my mind imagining colours, shapes and the conversation between violin, piano and voice."

"We lived in Hong Kong for 6 years and this performance took me back to our life in Hong Kong."

KEY PERSONNEL



ALAIN CHIU
COMPOSER | IDEA | DIRECTOR |
PERFORMER

An active composer in the music and multimedia scene of Hong Kong, Alain Chiu's music has been performed in concert halls and festivals through out the world.

Chiu's first multimedia opera, "Fish in the Hand" was premiered in 2015 and is one of the first Western Operas written for Cantonese.

Alain Chiu has received commissions from the **West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, Hong Kong Arts Festival Society, Kung Music Workshop, Sotheby's Hong Kong** and by numbers of musicians and groups including the **Afiara Quartet, the Ives Quartet and Louis Siu** among others. Chiu's music was performed at the **40th to the 44th Hong Kong Arts Festival, WKCD Freespace Micro 2013, 2012 Hong Kong Week at Taipei, Jumping Frames Italy Tour, Cannes Film Festival 2013 & 2014 and Guggenheim UBS No Country: Contemporary Art for South and Southeast Asia.**

Chiu is the founder of the **Trilateral Lab**, an experimental performance collective. The Lab is dedicated to challenge existing form and structure of performing arts. It also aims at incorporating new technologies as a way to stimulate and cultivate new ideas. Its inaugural performance, **Never Seen**, was premiered in 2017 at the **Adelaide Fringe Festival**.

Chiu received his Bachelor of Music degree in composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music with *Samuel Clarke Scholarship*, where he studies composition with *Conrad Susa, David Garner*, and electronic music with *Alden Jenks*. He attended the European American Musical Alliance in Paris directed by Dr. Philip Lasser with scholarship and has participated in masterclass by Jo Kondo. His former teachers have included Cui Shi-Guang and Lane Harder.

Alain Chiu is the recipient of the **Schulich Scholarship**. He is also the **Finalist of the International Music Prizes for Excellence in Composition**. Chiu's music was recorded by the Grammy Award winning ensemble **Orchestra of Our Time** in 2011. The focused topics of Chiu's music range from psychology, semantics, acoustics, literature, epistemology to current events. He is conducting an ongoing research through a series of works and performances, on how languages (with particular focus on Cantonese) and music can be weaved into one sonic fabric.



PAK-HONG CHU
CO-DIRECTOR | ACTOR | VOICE

Chu is a versatile and award-winning performing artist from Hong Kong. As a freelance actor, drama teacher and vocal of the famous indie band "Chu Ling Ling", he has been receiving high acclaims since his graduation at **Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts (Drama School)**. Chu has been awarded for the **Hong Kong Arts Development Awards 2015 - Young Artist (Drama)**, and nominated for the **Best Actor at the Hong Kong Small Theatre Award (2012 & 2013)**.



JACQUELINE WONG PRODUCER

Jacqueline is a producer working across theatre, dance, music and visual art. She joined the Hong Kong Fringe Club as the programme manager in 2007 and worked with local and overseas artists. She has played a main role in organizing art programmes for the Hong Kong Week at the Shanghai World Expo and the City Festival (2008–2010).

She became an independent producer in 2010 and has produced projects for music, theatre, dance and multi-media productions. She was selected by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council in 2013 for a cultural exchange scheme in the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, where she worked together with the music team in organizing the Wassermusik.

She was the curator of G'Day! Hong Kong – the first multidisciplinary showcase of Hong Kong artists at the Adelaide Fringe Festival.

ERIC CHAN MUSICIAN

Born in Australia and spent his time in Hong Kong and Australia, Eric Chan is a talent in both classical and contemporary music. He has studied Music Bachelor Degree in Royal Academy of Music, with renowned violinist Professor Diana Cummings. He has since performed with international artists such as Sir Colin Davies, Stephen Kovacevich, etc.; also he was guest violinist at LPYO and various orchestras. Eric later studied Master of Music as a pianist in Sydney Conservatorium of Music, with international pianist Stephanie McCallum.

Besides his regular orchestral, accompaniment and teaching responsibilities in Hong Kong, Eric has been regularly involved new music and art projects working with international as well as regional artists. He works regularly with the Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, and is a founding member of the Interzone Collective, who has performed in the well-known festival Clockenflap.

Eric has worked with artists from other disciplines, such as Room 9 Dance Theatre in the Hong Kong Arts Festival. He has joined force in “Fish in the Hand”, a new-style opera infused with the concepts of contemporary theatre.





Trilateral Lab is an experimental performance collective with the aim to challenge existing form and structure of performing arts. The Lab's mission is to create an environment where all artists are free to explore new ways and practices for cross-discipline artists to work collaboratively. Instead of surviving under dreadful production schedules, Trilateral Lab is more interested in the unexpected collision and discoveries via creative experimentation and explosive collaboration.

Trilateral Lab's past performances include **Have You Seen Those Lines?** (2014) a site-specific work at Hong Kong's legendary hideout *Sense 99*; providing artistic support for Alain Chiu's new media opera **Fish in the Hand** (2015); **Still Life** (2016) at Hong Kong Arts Centre; **Never Seen** (2017) premiered at Adelaide Fringe Festival and **Transience** (2017) a virtual reality video created in collaboration with Connecting Spaces Hong Kong.

Founded by classically trained composer Alain Chiu, Trilateral Lab is consisted of multimedia artists, composers, sound artists, choreographers, dramaturge, actors as well as professionals from different backgrounds. The Lab is also dedicated to incorporating new technologies, as a way to stimulate and cultivate new ideas.