San Francisco Contemporary Music Players

at the CROSSROADS Series

Guerrilla Sounds: Julius Eastman’s Legacy

Julius EASTMAN
Sidney CORBETT
Myra MELFORD
Fernanda Aoki NAVARRO
LJ WHITE
Adam STRAWBRIDGE
Wyatt CANNON

MAY 10 - 11, 2019
SFJAZZ
San Francisco, CA
San Francisco Contemporary Music Players is the West Coast’s most long-standing and largest new music ensemble comprised of highly skilled musicians performing innovative contemporary music. The Contemporary Music Players nourish the creation and dissemination of new works through world-class performances, commissions, and community and education programs. The Players perform the music of composers from across cultures and stylistic traditions who are creating a vast and vital 21st-century musical language featuring the work of iconic and emerging composers while shining a spotlight on large-ensemble pieces and California artists. The Players seek to share these experiences with as many people as possible, both in and outside of traditional concert settings.

The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players is one of the most active ensembles in the United States dedicated to contemporary music and play an important role in the regional and national cultural landscape. The Contemporary Music Players are a 2018 awardee of the esteemed Fromm Foundation Ensemble Prize, and a ten-time winner of the CMA/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming. The Players have performed more than 1,200 works by over 600 composers; Over 300 of these performances have been premieres, and the organization has commissioned over 80 major works including pieces from composers such as John Adams, John Cage, Earle Brown, Olly Wilson, Michael Gordon, Du Yun, Myra Melford, and Julia Wolfe. The Contemporary Players have been presented by leading cultural festivals and concert series including San Francisco Performances, Los Angeles Monday Evening Concerts, Cal Performances, the Stern Grove Festival, the Festival of New American Music at CSU Sacramento, the Ojai Festival, and France’s prestigious MANCA Festival.
Born in Toronto and raised in Connecticut, Eric Dudley leads a multi-faceted career as a conductor, composer, vocalist and pianist deeply engaged in the performance and creation of contemporary music. Since its founding in 2009, Eric has been a member of the genre-defying vocal octet Roomful of Teeth, touring worldwide and recording a wide array of newly commissioned works with the Grammy Award-winning ensemble. In the 2018-2019 season, he returns to Australia as principal conductor for the Bendigo Festival of Exploratory Music, where he has also appeared on the Melbourne Festival, and leads Roomful of Teeth and Ensemble L’Instant Donné in a production with Peter Sellars at the Paris Festival d’Automne. While living in New York, he conducted and performed with organizations as diverse as Ekmeles and Tenet vocal ensembles, the Choir of Trinity Wall Street, Talea Ensemble, American Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Signal and the New York Philharmonic. He was an assistant conductor for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra under Paavo Järvi and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra under Rossen Milanov for several seasons, and some of his recent guest engagements include the Ojai Festival in California, International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) in New York and Finland, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in Australia, and the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center. He served on the faculty of The New School and Mannes College of Music in New York, where he directed the Mannes Prep Philharmonic and The New School Chorus. He currently teaches conducting at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, having directed the orchestra program there for two seasons, and he was recently appointed to a year-long Artist-in-Residence position at the Conservatory of Music at The University of the Pacific in Stockton. As a pianist and chamber musician, he has performed with members of Novus New York and the Cincinnati and Princeton symphony orchestras, and his own music has been premiered and recorded by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Quay Percussion Duo, and by Roomful of Teeth. Eric lives in Walnut Creek with his wife Melanie and their infant son Ethan.
eight months after he died. Regardless of his life circumstances, there can be no doubt of the impact he had as a musical innovator at a key time for American music, and thankfully, through the efforts in preservation and advocacy of his work by some of those closest to him and most inspired by his music, that impact is being felt and recognized more and more in recent years.

At least in some way, all of the composers and works we encounter on this weekend’s concert series are connected to the efforts and explorations of Eastman – if not directly, then at least spiritually. From Sidney Corbett’s jazz- and philosophy-informed premiere and Myra Melford’s new piece for herself as improvising soloist with members of the ensemble, to LJ White’s and Fernanda Aoki Navarro’s musical essays that navigate, through means subtle or more overt, the deep waters concerning issues of racial identity, and finally in the contributions of two young composers selected for their attention to the influence of Eastman’s music through this year’s SF Search for Scores; through the dialogue amongst these diverse compositional voices, this weekend’s programs both highlight and re-contextualize the work of Julius Eastman in a manner that we hope sheds light on the import and urgency of his message as a composer–both during his lifetime, and now.

We welcome you to this final concert series of the year, thank you for your support, and invite you to continue your relationship with SFCMP in the coming seasons!

In highest regard,

Eric Dudley, Artistic Director
HONORING ROY C. (BUD) JOHNS

Our weekend’s concerts are dedicated to the memory of Roy C. (Bud) Johns who served on the board for twenty-two years from 1981 to 2003. Mr. Johns passed away on February 15, 2019.

As Board President in 2000-2001, Bud was deeply involved in creating the SFCMP Harold Wollack Legacy Circle which has provided a vehicle for organization-changing contributions.

Visit SFCMP.org for more information about SFCMP’s Legacy Circle.

GUERRILLA SOUNDS: JULIUS EASTMAN’S LEGACY MAY 10-11, 2019

Friday, May 10, 2019

LJ White, *fly, into the light* (2013)(5’)(WCP)
Owen Dalby, violin

Peter Josheff, bass clarinet; Brad Hogarth, trumpet; Tiffany Bayly, tuba; David Tanenbaum, electric guitar; Stan Muncy, percussion; Meredith Clark, harp; Kevin Rogers, Susan Freier, violin; Meena Bhasin, viola; Stephen Harrison, cello

*intermission 15 min*

Fernanda Aoki Navarro, *Impermanence* (2019) (c. 15’) (WP)
Tod Brody, flute; Peter Josheff, clarinet; Stan Muncy, percussion; Kate Campbell, piano; Benjamin Kreith, violin; Stephen Harrison, cello

Julius Eastman, *Stay on It* (1973) (c. 25’)
Kyle Bruckmann, oboe; Peter Josheff, clarinet; William Winant, percussion; Stan Muncy, percussion; Kate Campbell, piano; Benjamin Kreith, violin; Hannah Addario-Berry, cello

Saturday, May 11, 2019

Tod Brody, flute; Stan Muncy, vibraphone; Hannah Addario-Berry, cello

*Wyatt Cannon, Quicksilver* (2018) (WP) (6’)
Tod Brody, flute; Stan Muncy, vibraphone; Hannah Addario-Berry, cello

Julius Eastman, *Gay Guerrilla* (1979) (30’)
Kate Campbell, Allegra Chapman, piano

*intermission 15 min*

Myra Melford, piano soloist; Tod Brody, flute/piccolo/alto flute; Peter Josheff, clarinet; Kyle Bruckmann, oboe/english horn; Brendan Lai Tong, trombone; William Winant, percussion; Meredith Clark, harp; Kevin Rogers, violin; Meena Bhasin, viola; Hannah Addario-Berry, cello; Richard Worn, double bass

Key: *SF Search for Scores Winner, (C) SFCMP Commission, World Premiere (WP), US Premiere (USP), West Coast Premiere (WCP)

Adam Strawbridge and Wyatt Cannon are the winners of our 2019 SF Search for Scores program; Their pieces were inspired by the life and legacy of Julius Eastman.


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While coordinating the S.E.M. Ensemble of which Julius Eastman was a founding member, I had many opportunities to photograph the group in rehearsals and at performances. Intuitively, I had been aware of Eastman’s enormous talent - his sensitivity, humor, versatility, musicality, and leadership. He was an experimenter and risk taker. Julius could perform as an innocent, as the Mad King, as a dancer, painter, composer, singer, pianist. He reached deeply into himself, drew up archetypes, could be a tragic or comedic figure. The images before you, both posters and projections, add a visual aspect and dimension to the musical performances celebrating the legacy of Julius Eastman. Sometimes the word ethereal even comes to my mind when I think of Julius Eastman because he embodied elegance, grace and beauty.”

– Christine “Chris” Rusiniak

Chris Rusiniak is an American photographer and event organizer who worked in Buffalo, New York, in the 1970s. In 1974, Chris co-organized the month-long events in “Experiments in Art and Technology Exhibit 11011011 Broadcast 887574” at the University of Buffalo. As coordinator of the S.E.M. Ensemble, of which Julius Eastman was a founding member, she developed an interest in documenting musical performances. In the mid 1970s, Chris took up residence at 30 Essex Street in a converted ice factory/warehouse. While there, she participated in the beginnings of Hallwalls, a new venue for avant-garde artists, which is flourishing today. In recent years, since the re-discovery of Julius Eastman and world-wide events honoring his genius, writers, researchers, and curators have sought Rusiniak’s images of Eastman. Her images have appeared in books and articles and have been exhibited in Buffalo, Philadelphia, New York City, London, and Berlin.

christine.rusiniak@gmail.com
Notes on Julius Eastman’s work by Luciano Chessa, composer and Eastman scholar.

Taken together, *Stay on it* (1973) and *Gay Guerrilla* (1979) respectively represent Julius Eastman’s way into minimalism and his way out; both also give a good measure of Eastman’s own compositional development in the brief span of six years.

*Stay on it* is typically credited as being one of the first minimalist works to show the influence of popular music. The opening, Caribbean-infused riff displays the precision of a clockwork that is intermittently interrupted, and so moves in and out of Mingus-like free bursts. After several episodes of back-and-forth the original riff vanishes for good, and a ghostly memory of it appears as a substitute. The second riff is uninterrupted, and instead, a crescendo ensues—which performers begin to abandon the field as a lonely piano ‘stays on it’ for a while, exploring harmonic possibilities over the established fixed rhythm. When the piano loses its exploratory impetus, a crossfade with the tambourine brings the piece to a close.

A poem by the composer was reproduced in the program notes created for the 1973 performances of the piece: “[...With your movin’ and grooving on it / making me feel fine as wine / I don’t have to find the MEANING / because you will have filled in his most invisible and / intangible Majesty’s place; / But only if you stay on it. You Dig [...]” Its referencing African-American and Queer jiving further corroborates the thesis that Stay on it was the first installment in a series of musical essays on race Eastman produced throughout the ’70s, culminating with the monumental *Crazy Nigger* (1979).

*While Gay Guerrilla’s* score survives in a manuscript form, the score for *Stay on it* does not, and so the piece is nowadays performed by aid of a ‘skeleton’ score created by composer-performer Paul Pinto in 2009.

Notes on the remaining works by Eric Dudley, Artistic Director

Composer L.J. White’s own espousal of compositional ideals of “direct, focused and socially relevant expression” could not help but resonate with many of the aesthetic leanings present in the music of Julius Eastman, as well as with a whole generation of composers living in the current moment. In the same way that Eastman used more tonally-based and ‘popular’ musical resources to establish a backdrop for more adventurous or subversive elements, White’s *fly, into the light...* (2013) creates a surface level of apparent simplicity and clarity, embedded with subtle gestural content and fleeting departure from expectation. Inspired in part by the Beatles’ song ‘Blackbird’ (which itself was a response to the death of children in Alabama’s 1963 race riots), it also contains a muted reference to the kind of social consciousness that Eastman shouted forth in much of his music.

For solo violin and pre-recorded tracks of layered violin sound, the piece takes on an air of meditation and exploration within delicate shadings of expressivity and nuance, rather than virtuosic exercise. A drone note—one octave higher than the open D string on the instrument—is first sounded by the live soloist and re-articulated by the recorded tracks, setting up an axis around which the rest of the gestural sphere unfolds. An ornamental figure from the live soloist sparks a delicate flame, from which the rest of the material expands and contracts in echoes and variations. Through electronic means, we hear what begins to sound like an entire section of violinists all playing as soloists, within a texture that exploits the perfect intervals of the open strings and their octave equivalents to achieve an open and luminous harmonic field—against which the live performer delivers a narrative both integrated and independent. With momentary twinges of notes and gestures that sit ‘outside’ the texture, the soloist’s line traces a placid but assertive discourse before fading back onto reflections of itself.
From his youthful roots as a jazz-fusion guitarist and a stylistic omnivore, Sidney Corbett’s compositional language is self-avowedly broad, drawing on a range of sources both musical and otherwise: philosophy, literature, theology and visual art, in addition to musical influences as diverse as Islamic chant, Ligeti and Coltrane. For his new work Aporia (2019), the title’s roots are in Greek philosophy (a-poria: literally ‘not porous,’ and translated as that which is ‘impenetrable’), while an underlying thematic inspiration stems from the writing of Jacques Derrida, whose book of the same title (Aporias) is to Corbett most captivating in its discussion of “what might be behind factual existence, ‘this passage beyond truth,’ and accordingly…how to wrestle with the insoluble.”

The piece’s four movements, offset by distinct tempo markings and treatment of rhythmic activity, are interconnected through their materials—‘as the composer says, “each an individual reflection of the same musical face.” That face includes variant and conflicting divisions of the beat within each tempo frame, with instrument groups banding together in different and ever-shifting configurations to articulate carved triplet rhythms while others play in strong, contrary duple syncopations. The shifts of pulse that occur within each movement are governed by direct relationship through a series of metric modulations, and the general pulse feel at the outset of each movement ratchets up by degrees from slowest to fastest. Within that framework of juxtaposition and conflict, the instrumentation itself—slanted toward the bass end with the presence of bass clarinet, tuba, electric guitar and low-register writing for the harp—invokes darkened timbral hues playing against high solo lines for the violins and trumpet, together defining a set of outer boundaries within which a bandwidth of sonic spaciousness often exists.

Another source of influence, this time from the realm of visual art, are certain works by Johannes Vermeer and Cy Twombly, wherein for the composer “many sub-plots and subcutaneous layers of meaning can be discerned.” Like a Vermeer painting “in which one can see the outline of a clandestine intrigue,” or in the written passages of Twombly that form a “complex and often opaque midrasch on the subject of the painting,” Corbett hints that Aporia contains “musical ghosts—minor triads in string harmonics, lines obscured by rhythmic insistences elsewhere which occasionally surface,” and “hidden messages of varying scope which form an interwoven mesh beneath….” Extra-musical resources, like ‘contoured noise’ and snippets of text by Derrida whispered and spoken into the tuba, find their way into the texture. In creating such a sonic interplay of ideas, Corbett’s hope for the listener is to “hear and thus feel the resistance, the impenetrability which is the target of these musical thoughts,” and, perhaps, to “glean clues as to how to move forward” from that inquisitive point of departure.

For her new piece Impermanence (2019), Fernanda Aoki Navarro calls upon her own personal context for issues of race and identity. The first of its three movements, for piano solo, bears the title Mestiça (a Brazilian racial term translating as ‘mixed’), and one particular childhood experience based on her half-Brazilian, half-Japanese heritage figures prominently in the background for the movement. Around the same time as she endured an all-too-typical taunting from a schoolmate because of the shape of her eyes, she also “first learned a piece that used only the black keys of the piano (‘The Rickshaw Man,’ a rather stereotypical ‘oriental’ pentatonic piece for children, composed by a white man who probably didn’t see the borderline racist nature of his work). Mestiça combines simple fingering patterns used in children’s piano music, interlaced with the difference, clash and mutual assimilation of the ‘black keys’ and the ‘white keys’ of the piano.”

The main inspiration for the second movement, Uprooted, is the sense of “not belonging to the place of departure (a home country, for example), and not fully belonging
Improvissatory in nature, the cellist joins the pianist onstage and activates strings inside the instrument with an e-bow, while the pianist strikes or silently depresses and releases keys to affect the sonority. The other musicians enter on the heels of the first movement, at first playing handheld percussion instruments like rainsticks, slide flutes, bird whistles and the Brazilian roi-roi, and their translocation within the performance space and eventual motion toward the stage underscores the topic of migration. In the composer’s words, all is intended to sound “adrift, uprooted, as if lost in oceanic waves, sometimes calm, sometimes violent.”

In the final movement, Permanent Alien (and native friends), the ensemble convenes onstage to retake their standard instruments with some less conventional means (violin played with a guitar pick, and a detuning of the lowest string of the cello, for example). Fully notated and rhythmically seething, the movement puts an energetic spin on the dichotomy between alienation and acceptance. Reflecting on the friends she has made here in a country that bureaucratically dubs her a ‘resident alien,’ her thoughts are of the most positivistic bent within the wide array of sentiments surrounding the experiences of belonging and ‘otherness:’ “we learned about idiosyncrasies regarding our cultural backgrounds, we learned how to overwrite harmful stereotypes; we learned about similarities and differences between our countries, and we learned how the idea of ‘other’ was more of a construct than a reality.”

CONCERT #2
Saturday, March 11

Notes on Julius Eastman’s work by Luciano Chessa, composer and Eastman scholar.

Composed a year before AIDS was first clinically observed in the United States, on the tenth anniversary of the Stonewall riots, Gay Guerrilla (1979) constitutes at once Eastman’s most powerful tribute to the modern fight for gay rights and one of his most memorable works. This piece is the finest example of what Eastman called organic music: a large-scale additive process of accumulation of harmonic materials growing in curves of decreasing and increasing harmonic density and rhythm, making compositions breathe as if they were living organisms.

Gay Guerrilla is a penetrating essay with a clear dramatic trajectory. The repetition of pitches in similar metrical arrangements that makes up most of the piece’s fabric is at times lamenting, at times alienating, and eventually trumpeting/marching in an evocation of military fanfares and drumming. This sets the stage for the emotional climax of the composition: the presentation, in various octaves, of Martin Luther’s chorale Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott (A Mighty Fortress is Our God). From the incipit of the chorale Luther conjures up images of warfare, while the remainder of the lyrics are an explicit call for fortitude and strength to overcome oppression. The rhetoric of a Gay Liberation Front-inspired language is all over the composition. Reading Luther’s words in the context of Eastman’s own description of ‘guerrilla’ as the action of “someone who is... sacrificing his life for a point of view” allows us to understand the climax of the piece as a proclamation of Pride. Once the climax is reached, the piece, like a parade, slowly dissolves.

Notes on the remaining works by Eric Dudley, Artistic Director

For this year’s SF Search for Scores, composers were invited to submit pieces for instrumental trio of flute, vibraphone and cello that in some way involve a response to the work and legacy of Julius Eastman. For Adam Strawbridge, a graduate student in composition at UC Davis, he describes Theory and Practice and Praxis (2018) as an experiment “in the sort of highly iterative and often diatonic work of Eastman, and a continuation of the exploration I read from his works of how our theory (in music, and in social and political realms) is often at odds with our lived
practice." Built on a concise three-note motive, the "iterative and ultimately frenetic" material builds by accretion, through conflicting syncopations and polyrhythms that drive toward a point where the tension finally snaps, "allowing the melodic and resonant lyrical quality underlying the machine-like procedure to sing fully." Reinitiated by the cello, the mechanical process overtakes the closing frame of the piece, reflecting, as Strawbridge says, the "tensions between theory and practice in my lived experience both within and outside musical culture."

In the case of Wyatt Cannon, a composition student at University of the Pacific in Stockton, inspiration came through his admiration of Eastman’s "ability to create daedal, interesting music while only utilizing the bare minimum of motivic content. Shifts in harmony and rhythmic phasing give Eastman’s music a deep complexity: a complexity defined by the interaction of many parts, as opposed to overly verbose uses of non-harmonic material or incomprehensible rhythms." Quicksilver (2018) initiates through a phasing pattern between all three instruments, from which the voices gradually diverge and individualize to create a richer harmonic language. Increasing density of texture spills back out into moments of strong unison alignment, and a reverse presentation of a portion of the opening material gives a sense of return at the close. Cannon’s aim is “to have achieved something that is related to Eastman, but pushes the boundaries of post-minimalist style.”

Thanks in part to the groundwork laid by earlier experimentalists and adventurers like Eastman, the sometimes-perceived walls between fully composed and fully improvised music forms have been crumbling down more and more in successive generations. The Bay Area’s own Myra Melford is a composer-performer whose work exists in many zones along that spectrum, and the piece she has created for SFCMP, with herself as improvising soloist, is an amalgam of the personal interactions that helped to shape it. Over the course of the season, Melford spent time meeting with the players to explore each individual's fluidity and comfort zones within fully or partially improvised means, and created an engraved score and part set (with the assistance of our own Artistic Production Director Amadeus Regucera) that reflects a combination of notated and 'scripted' materials with looser gestural information, along with suggestions for figuration and timing-based passages that leave room for extemporaneity. In Melford’s words, the resultant piece "consists of several sections—musical environments—which are sonically evocative of techniques the composer has developed over the years through experimentation and performance”—a form guided and delineated by the transitions and overlaps of one mode of improvisation with another, in combination with more formally planned events and intersections along the way.

We enter into the environment of the piece before the ‘formal’ performance even starts, through an audio track that begins during the close of intermission. As the performers assemble onstage and live sound starts to take shape, we embark on the path through a series of more or less specified gestures and sonic explorations. Some of these are set down in the score with Melford’s own suggestive nomenclature as to the sound worlds they evoke—‘little creatures,’ ‘brush sticks,’ and ‘magnet towers’ to name a few. Each are discernible gestural fields with distinct sonic profiles; short, evanescent pizzicati with slides and rotating oboe multi-phonics, tongue stops and key clicks on wind and brass instruments against tremolo/pizzicato combinations in the strings, and group articulations of pitch and noise structures that start with forceful unison attacks and decay into dissipated echoes. All of these fields contain independent development and exploration of the sound environment at hand, sometimes for just a few players and sometimes for the full ensemble, and from around the midpoint of the piece, a rough trajectory begins toward greater degrees of fully-scripted organization—which after a brief interruption by piano and percussion...
duo, culminates in a full ensemble tutti with strongly aligned, complex rhythmic materials.

For her own solo part, Melford employs certain notated passages in relation to how they interact with other instruments in the ensemble, and in other cases, extended passages are left purely to creation in the moment. Overall, very little of the solo part is fully notated, except for the piano ‘interruptions’ in the first phases of the piece that later become the basis for the full tutti section. In fact, every musician’s part is a combination to a greater or lesser degree of improvisatory passages and partially or fully notated materials, and Melford has achieved a thoroughly fluid application of those variables within a tailor-made construct: a piece crafted with and around the individual proclivities and zones of fluency for both herself and the members of SFCMP.
**COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES**

**Julius Eastman** (1940 - 1990) was an American composer, pianist, vocalist, and dancer whose work fell under minimalism. He was among the first musicians to combine minimalist processes with elements of pop music, as well as, within his music, present dramatic and suspenseful tendencies.

His long-form piano pieces highlight his intention to dramatically explore his black and gay identity through motifs that, in tone and repetition, represent heightening conflict. More particularly, Eastman described his own style of minimalism as ‘organic music; a style of ‘gradual accrual and accumulation, often followed by gradual disintegration, where he would gradually and sometimes abruptly alter repeated phrases to create the basis for his works.

**Sidney Corbett** was born in Chicago in 1960, studied music and philosophy at the University of California, San Diego, and continued his study of composition at Yale University, where he earned his doctorate in 1989, and at the Hamburg Academy of the Arts with György Ligeti. Corbett has been active primarily in Europe since 1985. His output includes works for the stage, orchestral compositions, instrumental chamber music and a large amount of vocal music. His works have earned him numerous national and international awards and prizes and have been performed and broadcast worldwide.

Sidney Corbett is the guitarist of the band “Vierte Heimat” and also plays in a number of improvisation ensembles, with among others Mazen Kerbaj and Richie Beirach.

**Pianist, composer, bandleader and educator Myra Melford** has spent the last three decades making brilliant original music that is equally challenging and engaging. Culling inspiration from a wide range of sources including Cecil Taylor, the blues and boogie-woogie of her native Chicago, the poetry of Rumi, the AACM and yoga, she’s explored an array of formats, among them ruminative solo-piano recitals, deeply interactive combos and ambitious multidisciplinary programs. Melford has a unique creative language—a seamless, shifting blend of composition and improvisation, and a probing of the space shared between dynamic small-group jazz and contemporary chamber music. Since debuting on record as a bandleader in 1990, she’s built a discography of more than 20 albums as a leader or co-leader.

**Fernanda Aoki Navarro** is a musician born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, based in San Diego, California. She graduated in music composition at University of Sao Paulo, moved to the United States in 2011, where she did her Masters at UC Santa Cruz. She’s a Ph.D. candidate at UC San Diego. She works with acoustic and electroacoustic music, performance art and sound installation. She doesn’t believe in the idea that a bio makes music more interesting. Fernanda doesn’t like to be reduced to a gender, doesn’t know how to dance samba, procrastinates to write program notes, doesn’t know how to react when someone makes a compliment or a critique, goes to the cinema every week, drinks coffee every day.
LJ White’s music serves ideals of direct, focused and socially relevant expression, assimilating an unrestricted array of influences through unpredictable-yet-contagious rhythms, strange and evocative sonorities, self-evident gestures, and apposite forms. He has worked with some of the most exciting players in contemporary music, including Alarm Will Sound, Ensemble SIGNAL, Ensemble Dal Niente, the JACK Quartet, the Spektral Quartet, Third Coast Percussion, Volti, and members of the International Contemporary Ensemble, Roomful of Teeth, the Talea Ensemble, and the Bang on a Can All-Stars.

Adam Strawbridge is a composer from New England, currently a PhD candidate at UC Davis. His music explores the expression of motif in melody, harmony, and rhythm, as well as a tactile approach to texture and color through gesture and form. He received a B.A. in Music and Political Theory from Williams College and a M.M. in Composition from the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri – Kansas City. His principal teachers have been Mika Pelo, Chen Yi, Zhou Long, and Reynold Simpson. He won first prize from the 2017 Music From China International Composition Competition, and was a finalist for the 2018 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award. His music has been performed by ensembles such as Music From China, Wild Rumpus, counter)induction, Beo Quartet, and others.

Wyatt Cannon is a composer and pianist from San Jose, California who is currently studying music composition at the University of the Pacific. He has written music for a variety of ensembles, including solo piano, string quartet, percussion ensemble and full orchestra. In 2017, he won the Victor Salvo Music Composition Scholarship for his piece entitled Polarity, a two movement string quartet. He has studied piano for over thirteen years, and attained his Advanced Level Certificate of Merit from the Music Teachers’ Association of California in 2018.

Cannon’s compositions are greatly influenced by Minimalist and Post-Minimalist composers such as Steve Reich and Belinda Reynolds. However, he still incorporates a variety of different styles into his music. The lyrical sensibilities of late romantic composers such as Grieg and Dvořák are clearly present in his work.

Tonight’s Guest Musicians

Please join us in applauding the following guest musicians on tonight’s performance:

Brad Hogarth, trumpet
Brendan Lai Tong, trombone
Tiffany Bayly, tuba
Stan Muncy, percussion
Meredith Clark, harp
Allegra Chapman, piano
Kevin Rogers, violin
Benjamin Kreith, violin
Owen Dalby, violin

Wyatt Cannon

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Owen Dalby, violin
Meena Bhasin (viola) is co-founder of Decoda—the affiliate ensemble of Carnegie Hall—which combines great artistry with civic engagement. She has led Decoda around the globe from Mexico to India and Abu Dhabi. Meena was invited to perform at the Obama White House, highlighting Decoda’s work in criminal justice reform. She has toured the U.S. as a soloist with legendary rock band Jethro Tull and performed Persian music as a soloist with the New York Philharmonic. Meena is the founder of Reveler and the Co-Artistic Director of Noe Valley Chamber Music. She holds degrees from New England Conservatory and Tufts University.

Cellist Hannah Addario-Berry specializes in chamber music and solo repertoire and is passionately committed to performing music by living composers. In 2015, Hannah created Scordatura, an innovative project combining Zoltán Kodály’s monumental Sonata for Solo Cello with a series of newly commissioned works, which all share a unique altered tuning of the cello. An avid and versatile chamber musician, Hannah joined SFCMP in 2017. Addarioberry.com

Jeff Anderle (clarinet) is a pioneer in the world of low reeds, helping to popularize the role of the modern clarinet and bass clarinet through his innovative and diverse performances, ensembles, and commissions. He is a member of Splinter Reeds, the bass clarinet duo Sqwonk, and REDSHIFT, and a former member of Edmund Welles and the Paul Dresher Electro/Acoustic Band. Jeff is a founding co-director of Switchboard Music, and serves on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music where he teaches clarinet, chamber music and professional development, and is the chair of the woodwind department.

Violinist Hrabba Atladottir studied in Berlin, Germany with professor Axel Gerhardt and professor Tomasz Tomaszewski. After finishing her studies, Hrabba worked as a freelance violinist in Berlin for five years, regularly playing with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsche Oper, and Deutsche Symphonieorchester. Hrabba also participated in a world tour with the Icelandic pop artist Björk, and a Germany tour with violinist Nigel Kennedy. Joshua Kosman, music critic of San Francisco Chronicle, praised her performance of Vivaldi’s Spring, and called her violin playing “delicate but fervent.”

Tod Brody is principal flutist with SFCMP, as well as local new music groups Earplay, Eco Ensemble, and the Empyrean Ensemble, with an extensive career that has included performances of numerous world premieres and many recordings. He is also principal flutist of the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, the Sacramento Opera, and the California Musical Theater, and makes frequent appearances with the San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet orchestras, and in other chamber and orchestral settings throughout the region. In addition to performing and teaching, Tod is an active arts administrator, currently serving as Executive Director of the Marin Symphony.

Oboist Kyle Bruckmann’s work as a composer and performer spans from the Western classical tradition into the frontiers of free jazz, electronic music and post-punk. With more than 80 recordings and a striking array of performance affiliations to his credit he has been acclaimed as “a modern day renaissance musician,” and “a seasoned improviser with impressive extended technique and peculiar artistic air.” Before relocating to the Bay Area in 2003, Kyle was a fixture in Chicago’s experimental music underground, collaborating regularly with electro acoustic duo EKG, the “noise-rock monstrosity” Lozenge, and the Creative Music quintet Wrack.

Kylebruckmann.com

Hailed as a “brilliant pianist” (Financial Times), Kate Campbell performs frequently as a soloist and chamber musician specializing in 20th and 21st century music. She is at home with styles ranging from thorny modernism, to “sleek and spirited” minimalism, to...
indie classical. Kate is the co-founder and pianist of the interdisciplinary duo KATES, which intertwines new solo piano music with new dance. They have been featured at NYSoundCircuit, Dance Conversations Festival at the Flea Theater in New York, and Omaha Under the Radar. In the contemporary ensemble REDSHIFT, she continues her guest artist residency at Cal State University East Bay, premiering works by faculty and student composers. katecampbellpiano.com

Susan Freier (violin) After earning a degree in Music and Biology at Stanford, Susan co-founded the widely-acclaimed Chester String Quartet at the Eastman School of Music. She has been a participant at the Aspen, Grand Teton and Newport Music Festivals, and has performed on NPR, the BBC, and German State Radio. She is currently on the artist faculty of the Schlern International Music Festival in Italy and the San Diego Chamber Music Workshop and a member of the Ives Quartet (formerly the Stanford String Quartet). Her recordings are on the Newport Classics, Stolat, Pantheon, Laurel, Music and Arts, and CRI labels. Percussionist Christopher Froh is a member of Empyrean Ensemble, Rootstock Percussion, and San Francisco Chamber Orchestra. He has premiered over 100 chamber and solo works by composers from 15 countries. His rich and diverse career includes performances with the San Francisco Symphony at Carnegie Hall, Gamelan Sekar Jaya at the Stern Grove Festival, and session recordings at Skywalker Ranch. As a soloist, he has appeared at festivals and recitals across Japan, China, Turkey, Europe, and the United States including featured performances at the Beijing Modern Festival, Nuovi Spazi Musicali, and Music@Menlo. He teaches percussion and chamber music at UC Davis and CSU Sacramento. A very active cellist in the Bay Area and beyond, Stephen Harrison is a founding member of the Ives Quartet (formerly known as Stanford String Quartet) and a member of the faculty at Stanford University. Formerly principal cellist of the Chamber Symphony of San Francisco, the Opera Company of Boston, and the New England Chamber Orchestra, Harrison has performed on National Public Radio, the BBC, and on both German State Radio and the Netherlands State Radio. Stephen has toured internationally and recorded on the Delos, CRI, New Albion, and Newport Classics labels.

Peter Josheff, clarinetist and composer, has been on the front lines of the northern California new music scene for more than thirty years as a composer and clarinetist. He is a founding member of Earplay and of Sonic Harvest, and is a core member of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the Empyrean Ensemble (UC Davis), and the Eco Ensemble (UC Berkeley). He performs frequently with Opera Parallele and the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and has worked with many other groups including Other Minds, West Edge Opera, Melody of China, the Ives Collective, Mills College Contempory Performance Ensemble, the Paul Dresher Ensemble, and Composers, Inc.

Adam Luftman is the Principal Trumpet of both the San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet Orchestras. Adam has been a featured soloist with a number of orchestras and is member of the National Brass Ensemble and The Bay Brass. He has recorded with the Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, the National Brass Ensemble, for ESPN Sunday Night Football, and on many movie and video game soundtracks. Luftman is currently on the faculties of the San Francisco Conservatory, UC Berkeley, and San Francisco State University. He has presented masterclasses all over the country including The Curtis Institute of Music, New England Conservatory, Cleveland Institute of Music, New World Symphony, and Tanglewood.

Roy Malan serves as solo violinist with the California Symphony and Opera Parallele and was the longtime concertmaster and solo violinist for the San Francisco Ballet. The founding director of the Telluride Chamber Music Festival, he has an extensive career of performance domestically as well as in Canada, Mexico, Europe,
Australia, and Africa to his credit. He is widely recorded on the Genesis, Orion, and several other labels. Roy currently serves on the faculty of the University of California, Santa Cruz, and plays locally with a string quartet, piano trio, and music festival engagements.

Loren Mach (percussionist) is a graduate of the Oberlin and Cincinnati Conservatories, he has premiered countless solo, chamber, and orchestral works. He teaches at the University of California, Berkeley and is principal percussionist of eco ensemble, principal timpanist of San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and co-founder of Rootstock Percussion. Mach often performs with the San Francisco Symphony and other local orchestras. In 2011, he was awarded the Investing in Artists grant from the Center for Cultural Innovation. He appeared in two full-length concerts at the 2014 Venice Biennale with eco ensemble, including a special performance of Nagoya Marimbas for Golden Lion lifetime achievement honoree, Steve Reich.

Oboist Sarah Rathke maintains a busy and enthusiastic performance presence in Northern California and beyond, as a member of the Sacramento Philharmonic and Chamber Orchestras and a regular performer with the symphonies of Marin, Fremont, Santa Rosa, Vallejo, California, Berkeley, Monterey and Santa Cruz. She was a member of the Avenue Winds, a Bay Area woodwind quintet committed to new music, and has also performed with various orchestras including the San Francisco Symphony and the San Francisco Ballet. Rathke is a Professor of Oboe at UC Berkeley. Sarah joined SFCMP in 2012.

Nanci Severance (viola) is a member of the San Francisco Symphony and has performed with many Bay area ensembles, including Chamber Music West, the Midsummer Mozart Chamber Players, and the Parlante Chamber Orchestra, with whom she was principal violist. She is also a member of the Donatello String Quartet, and a regular guest artist with the Ives Quartet. Over the course of her career, Nanci has performed with the Toledo Symphony, the Cleveland Opera orchestra, the Cleveland Ballet, as Assistant Principal violist of the Aspen Chamber Orchestra and rotating Principal of the Spoleto Festival Orchestra.

David Tanenbaum has performed as a solo guitarist throughout the US, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Solo performances over the course of his career have included the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Vienna’s ORF orchestra, and elsewhere, under the baton of such eminent conductors as Esa-Pekka Salonen, Kent Nagano and John Adams. Tanenbaum has toured extensively with Steve Reich and Musicians, in Japan with Toru Takemitsu, and has had a long association with Ensemble Modern. He is currently recording the complete guitar works of Sofia Gubaidulina for Naxos. Chair of the San Francisco Conservatory’s Guitar Department.

Peter Wahrhaftig is Principal Tubist of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, the Sun Valley Summer Symphony, and is a founding member of the Grammy-nominated Bay Brass. He appears frequently with the San Francisco Opera, the Oakland-East Bay Symphony and numerous other local organizations, both in concert and in recordings, including those of Alvin Curran, Christian Wolff, and electro-acoustic composer Chris Brown. In addition to his performance career, Wahrhaftig has performed on the soundtracks of numerous movie and video games. He can be heard on Alvin Curran’s eclectic CD Animal Sounds, and he now teaches at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, U.C. Berkeley, and privately in the Bay Area.

Grammy-nominated percussionist William Winant is internationally regarded as a leading performer of avant-garde music. In 2014, he received a Grammy nomination for his recording of John Cage’s historic solo work, 27’ 10.554” for a percussionist, on MicroFest Records. Winant has collaborated with legends of 20th and 21st century music, from Iannis Xenakis to Steve Reich and Yo-Yo Ma, and from Merce Cunningham to Kronos.
SFCMP percussionist Nick Woodbury also performs with and co-directs Mantra Percussion—a group dedicated to large-scale projects that redefine the traditional classical music concert format. Woodbury has appeared alongside the Bang on a Can All-Stars, with the Ensemble Modern Akademie, and Eco Ensemble. His work with contemporary music includes premiering new works by George Crumb, John Luther Adams, Michael Gordon, and many others. Woodbury has appeared at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Apple Store at Lincoln Center, Kresge Auditorium at MIT, New Music New College, Symphony Space in Manhattan, Carlsbad New Music Festival and many more internationally-acclaimed performing arts centers.

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Quartet and Sonic Youth. Composers who have written for Winant include John Cage, Lou Harrison, John Zorn, Peter Garland, Larry Polansky and many more. In 2016, Winant was awarded a prestigious grant from the Foundation of Contemporary Arts in recognition for his groundbreaking work as a contemporary percussionist.

Double bassist Richard Worn has performed extensively with the San Francisco Opera and Symphony. Currently, he serves as Assistant Principal Bass of the Marin Symphony and Principal Bass of the Sanse Chamber Orchestra as well as with the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players, ECO Ensemble, Other Minds sfsound, Empyrean Ensemble, Earplay, and Composer’s Inc. Richard is also former Principal Bass of the New Century Chamber Orchestra. With his Worn Chamber Ensemble, founded in 1996, has performed works for both solo bass and ensemble by such composers as Andriessen, Cage, Harrison, Henze, Revueltas, Scelsi, Varese, and Xenakis. He currently teaches and provides orchestral coaching at UC Berkeley.

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Hannah Addario-Berry & Stephen Harrison

photo by Stephen B. Hahn
THE HAROLD WOLLACK LEGACY CIRCLE

A former subscriber, Harold Wollack, left the first bequest to help underwrite the ensemble’s concerts and programs. Recently, the ensemble received generous bequests from the estates of Jane Roos and Victor and Esta Wolfram. All bequests help to ensure that our organization will remain vibrant and that future generations will enjoy the music of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. We thank the following individuals who have arranged a legacy gift in support of our future:

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