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NEW FREQUENCIES FEST 2016

APRIL 28 8PM
PAMELA Z

APRIL 29 8PM
THERESA WONG

EDWARD
SCHOCKER &
THE CROSSING
ENSEMBLE

APRIL 30 8PM
LUCIANO
CHESSA

YBCA FORUM
& GRAND LOBBY

#NEWFREQFEST2016

YERBA BUENA
CENTER FOR
THE ARTS

MUSIC
PERFORMANCE ART
SOUND

WELCOME TO YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Our organization was founded in 1993 as a citizen institution that would be home to the diverse local arts community while serving to connect the Bay Area to the world. YBCA's mission is to generate culture that moves people. We believe that culture—a collection of art, traditions, values, human experiences, and stories—is what enables us to act with imagination and creativity, to act socially, politically, and with conviction. Culture instigates change in the world.

We believe that more and different kinds of people need to be defining culture today and that more people need to have access to cultural experiences that are relevant to their lives and their communities. We need new definitions and new experiences that bring people together regardless of their differences in order to make the inclusive and equitable culture we need today. We believe that the arts should be on the front line of change and that cultural institutions exist to spur and support big societal movements. Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, we are committed to kindling inclusive culture that cultivates empathy, awakens personal and societal transformation, and reaches for a world fueled by inspiration. The need has never been stronger than now, and there is no better place than YBCA to answer the call. We are so glad that you are here. We are grateful for your cultural participation, and we hope you will come back and enjoy all that YBCA has to offer.

Warmly,

DEBORAH CULLINAN
CEO of YERBA BUENA
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

YBCA Presents

NEW FREQUENCIES FEST 2016

THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 8PM

MEMORY TRACE, Pamela Z

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 8PM

THE UNLEARNING, Theresa Wong

THE CROSSING, Edward Schocker and the
Crossing Ensemble

SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 8PM

A RETROSPECTIVE, Luciano Chessa



Pamela Z photo of *Memory Trace* by Silvia Matheus

A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

ISABEL YRIGOYEN
MUSIC CURATOR



San Francisco was at the forefront of musical experimentation during the 1960s counterculture. The city's history with the avant-garde, particularly as the Tape Music Center developed new tape-based art forms, contributed to a wealth of creative collaborations among artists such as Terry Riley, Steve Reich, David Tudor, Pauline Oliveros, and others with the San Francisco's Actor's Workshop, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, Anna Halprin Dancers' Workshop, and Canyon Cinema.

The Bay Area is experiencing a resurgence of national recognition with its healthy and vibrant experimental music scene spearheaded by the Center for New Music, Mills College, San Francisco Symphony's SoundBox, the Other Minds music festival, and the Luggage Store Creative Music Series. The San Francisco Conservatory of Music and its New Music Gathering conference hopes to be an annual hybrid conference and music festival of national scope devoted to contemporary music.

YBCA's *New Frequencies Festival 2016* highlights the work of four Bay Area-based artists from this underground scene: Pamela Z, Theresa Wong, Edward Schocker, and Luciano Chessa. Each play a pivotal role in the new sound music arena, delving into experimentation with old and new technologies, making instruments, repurposing traditional instruments to create new sounds, and using the body and voice to push the envelope and create new forms.

The projects bridge music and sound, performance, and visual arts to express concepts and explore the contemporary human condition with imagination, depth, and humor. Pamela Z opens with the premiere of *Memory Trace*, an exploration of the concept of memory, occupying the intersection of technology and theater, and forefronts the artist's extraordinary operatic vocal range. Theresa Wong's *The Unlearning*, is a timely reflection on war and whether we can unlearn cycles of violence. Edward Schocker's *The Crossing* takes us into a contemplative space of ecstatic sound rooted in improvisation, contrasting traditional shinawi Korean musical practice with contemporary performance. Luciano Chessa's retrospective is a self-portrait, showcasing sixty-four hand-picked artists from gospel to orchestra. Chessa also premieres *A Blind Date*, inspired by his personal life and experiences as an openly gay Italian man.

Join us for a remarkable three-day festival and an extraordinary range of expression and sound art. Enjoy!

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

MEMORY TRACE

Pamela Z

Memory Trace is a solo performance exploring various aspects of memory through voice, electronics, multichannel video, sampled text fragments, and gestural movement. The work grew out of a sound and video installation that I showcased at Arc Gallery in 2012. It unfolds through a series of dreamlike sonic and visual episodes of remembering and forgetting.

Part of my working process involved making audio and video recordings of interviews with a number of people, whom I asked to recount memories, dreams, and curious memory-related stories. I mined these for speech and image fragments to collage, layering and triggering samples in the performance. I composed music combining my live voice and electronic processing with this audio and video source material, which I conjured and controlled using instruments that sensed my physical gestures and the amplitude of my voice. These voices, faces, and figures emerge periodically throughout the various episodes, acting as connective tissue for the work, forming some of its multiple layers.

I can still remember the day in the early 1990s when I first purchased memory. I delighted in the fact that I could hold it in my hand: a thin green wafer etched with a lattice of metal lines. I quickly noticed parallels between the computer's memory and my own. Prone to anthropomorphism, I continue to compare and often confuse the two. I am interested in exploring how humans and computers store memory. How do they "misplace" information, or lose it entirely? How can we differentiate between dreams and real or manufactured memories? Why do certain sounds or aromas trigger very old recollections?

As I was developing *Memory Trace*, my aging mother was living out her final years. I became deeply interested in the vast memories she held as well as the rapid



Pamela Z photo by Silvia Matheus

changes in the way her memory worked. She began launching into dialogues about (and with) people from her past as if those conversations had taken place just yesterday or were in the midst of happening. She began sharing fragments of her past that she had never spoken of before and mentioning names that my sisters and I had never heard. It was as if she was time traveling—slipping in and out of the present. My observations of her inspired me to examine subtle changes in my own memory processes. I began to wonder how my memory will change in the future. Toward the end of her life I made some audio and video recordings of her, and a small amount of that footage made its way into *Memory Trace* in the form of a short, single-channel movie used as an episode in the piece. My mother passed away in early August 2015, just one week after I mounted a work-in-progress run of the piece, and I will always think of the work as being dedicated to her memory.

Memory Trace was workshopped at New Music New College in Sarasota, Florida, in January 2015. The work-in-progress showed at Royce Gallery in San Francisco in summer 2015 in an intimate three-night run.

ARTIST PROFILES

PAMELA Z

Creator, composer, performer

Pamela Z is a composer, performer, and media artist who works primarily with voice, live electronic processing, sampled sound, and video. A pioneer of live digital looping techniques, she processes her voice in real time to create dense, complex sonic layers. Her solo works combine experimental extended vocal techniques, operatic bel canto, found objects, text, and sampled concrete sounds. She uses MAX MSP and Isadora software on a MacBook Pro along with custom MIDI controllers that allow her to manipulate sound and image with physical gestures. Her performances range in scale from small concerts in galleries to large-scale multimedia works in theaters and concert halls. In addition to her performance work, she has a growing body of intermedia gallery works involving multichannel sound and video installations.

Pamela Z has toured extensively to perform in international festivals, including Bang on a Can at Lincoln Center, New York; the Venice Biennale; Interlink Festival, Japan; Other Minds, San Francisco; and Pina Bausch Tanztheater 25 Jahre Fest, Germany. She has composed, recorded,

and performed original scores for choreographers and for film and video artists. She has done vocal work for other composers, including Charles Amirkhanian, Vijay Iyer, and Henry Brant. Her large-scale multimedia performance works Parts of Speech, Gaijin, Voci, and Baggage Allowance have been presented at the Kitchen, New York; Theater Artaud and ODC Theater, San Francisco; the Museum of Contemporary Art theater, Chicago; theaters in Washington, DC, and Budapest, Hungary, and beyond. Her one-act opera Wunderkabinet, inspired by the Museum of Jurassic Technology (co-composed with Matthew Brubeck), premiered at the Lab in San Francisco, and was subsequently presented at REDCAT in Los Angeles and the Open Ears Festival in Canada. Pamela Z has shown media works in exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Erzbischöfliches Diözesanmuseum, Cologne; the Tang Museum, Saratoga Springs, New York; the Dakar Biennale, Senegal; the Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois; and the Kitchen, New York.

Pamela Z has received chamber commissions from a number of contemporary music ensembles, including the Kronos Quartet, the Bang on a Can All Stars, Ethel String Quartet, the California E.A.R. Unit, Left Coast Chamber

Ensemble, the Empyrean Ensemble, and St. Luke's Chamber Orchestra. She has had numerous dance commissions, providing scores for choreographers such as Brenda Way (ODC Dance), Jo Kreiter (Flyaway Productions), and Donald Byrd (Spectrum Dance Theater). She curates and produces the ROOM Series, a San Francisco avant-chamber series featuring a variety of virtuosic solo artists and chamber groups playing experimental music. She has collaborated with a wide range of artists, including Joan La Barbara, Joan Jeanrenaud, Miya Masaoka, Jeanne Finley and John Muse, Shinichi Iova Koga (inkBoat), and Luciano Chessa. Her interactive web-based work Baggage Allowance can be viewed at baggageallowance.tv, where it is permanently installed.

Pamela Z has been the recipient of many honors and awards, including the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Doris Duke Artist Impact Award, the Herb Alpert Award in the Arts, the Creative Capital Fund, the MAP Fund, the ASCAP Music Award, an Ars Electronica honorable mention, and the NEA Japan/US Friendship Commission Fellowship. She holds a music degree from the University of Colorado.

pamelaz.com

IAN WINTERS

Camera and video technologist

Ian Winters is an award-winning video and media artist working at the intersections of performance, architectural form, and time-based media. In addition to individual work he often collaborates with composers, directors, and choreographers to create both staged and open-ended media environments through performance and visual and acoustic media.

Winters's recent awards include a 2014–15 Isadora Duncan Award for visual design and a 2016 master artist residency at Atlantic Center for the Arts. He has had further residencies at Djerassi, the University of Sussex, and Earthdance. Winters received funding from the Rainin and Zellerbach Foundation in 2013. He was

an ISEA panelist on sensor-driven and network performance, Leonardo LASER presentations. He received 2012 and 2014 LAD awards for video design, and a 2012–13 Isadora Duncan Award nomination for best visual design. He teaches workshops in interactive video and sound, and has been a visiting artist and conference presenter in media and performance at many institutions, including the University of San Francisco, San Francisco State University, MIT, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Louisiana State University, the University of Roehampton, the University of Brighton, Amherst College, Duke University, the University of Sussex, and Brunel University London.

Winters received a BFA in photography, video/film, and performance at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Tufts University. He completed postgraduate training in architecture and live performance and is also the co-curator of Oakland's MilkBar, with Mary Armentrout.

ianwinters.com

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY TEAM

Ian Winters *Camera and Video Tech*
José María Francos *Lighting Design*
Donald Swearingen *Gesture Control Instruments*

VIDEO PERFORMERS

Mary Armentrout
Dana Iova-Koga
Shinichi Iova-Koga
Satu Palokangas
Julie Queen
Sten Rudstrøm
Paige Starling Sorvillo
Marshall Trammell

SAMPLED VOICES

Geraldine Cipolla Beaird
Ronee Blakley
Shaun Boyle
George Brant
Beverly Brooks
Mel Day
Evelyn Ficarra
Skip Gianocca



Pamela Z photo of *Memory Trace* by Silvia Matheus

Traci Horgen
Kristofer Mills
Dennis O’Leary
Jinni Seo
Gustavo Villegas-Solís
David Watson
Paul Young

YOU MUST REMEMBER THIS (THE MOMMY MOVIE)

Diane Lebedz
Beverly Brooks
Carol Brooks
Linda Brooks
Pamela Z
Tony Bennett
Johnny Mathis
J Brooks Marcus
William Brooks
Richard Lebedz

All music composed by Pamela Z © Last Letter Music (ASCAP) except music in the Mommy Movie: “As Time Goes By” by Herman Hupfeld (performed by Tony Bennett) and “Fly Me to the Moon” by Bart Howard (performed by Johnny Mathis)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

THE UNLEARNING

Theresa Wong

The Unlearning is inspired by the work of the Spanish artist Francisco Goya, which Theresa Wong discovered as a printmaking student living abroad in Europe in 1998. Goya’s series of aquatint etchings published thirty-five years after his death, *Los desastres de la guerra* (*The Disasters of War*, 1810–20), are powerful images of the Peninsular War between Spain and Napoleon’s French Empire. In 2009 Wong referenced this work while composing *The Unlearning*, drawing parallels to the violence in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Wong’s work questions how the thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes that lie within each of us can affect societies, cultures, and countries at war. Visual projections by the filmmakers Daria Martin and Mao Mollona combine Goya’s etchings with ancient goddess imagery from the research of the archaeologist Marija Gimbutas. Through extensive excavations in central Europe, Gimbutas discovered matrilineal societies that existed for thousands of years without any evidence of warfare. Imagery of feminine animal-human deities such as rams, deer, bears, and snakes symbolizes the protective characteristic of the feminine in these matrilineal societies. Juxtaposing this art from supposedly peaceful societies and the art of Goya’s violent times surfaces the role of matriarchy and patriarchy in peace and war. *The Unlearning* explores this phenomenon in current times. Through imagery and song, the piece calls into question whether war is a cycle that repeats itself or whether it can be broken through deeper processes of individual and collective unlearning and learning.



Theresa Wong photo by Peter Gannushkin

THE BILL

The Unlearning

1. Bury Them and Keep Quiet
2. With or Without Reason
3. Against the Common Good
4. Everything Is Topsy-Turvy
5. Farándula de Charlatanes
6. Feline Pantomime
7. Sad Presentiments of What Must Come to Pass
8. And This Too
9. Strange Devotion!
10. It Serves You Right
11. This Always Happens
12. I Saw It
13. Las Camas de la Muerte
14. This Is Worse
15. When Truth Dies What Is Her Heaven?
16. Folksong for the Landless
17. What Courage!
18. Nothing, We Shall See
19. Proud Monster!
20. Candlehat

(All titles except 15, 16, and 20 are from Goya’s etching titles)

ARTIST PROFILES

THERESA WONG

Theresa Wong is a composer, cellist, and vocalist actively exploring the intersection of music, creative experimentation, improvisation, and the synergy of multiple disciplines. Raised in upstate New York and the San Francisco Bay Area, Wong studied classical piano and cello from an early age. Her interests expanded into design, leading her to Stanford University’s product design program, as well as the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and Fabric. While living in Venice, Wong realized her vision to unite music with the inquisitive process of design, with hopes of transforming the potential of performance. Upon returning to the United States, she completed an MFA at Mills College.

Wong’s works include *The Unlearning* (released on Tzadik, 2011), *O Sleep*, and *Venice Is a Fish* (released on Sensitive Skin



Photo by Peter Gannushkin

Music, 2014). She has presented her work internationally at Fondation Cartier, Paris; Cafe OTO, London; Area Sismica, Forlì, Italy; Festival de Arte y Ópera Contemporánea, Morelia, Mexico; and Roulette and the Stone, New York, and other venues. She is a recipient of grants and awards from Civitella Ranieri Foundation, the Center for Cultural Innovation, Meet the Composer, and the American Composers Forum. She is currently based in Berkeley.
theresawong.org

CARLA KIHLESTEDT

Carla Kihlstedt is a songwriter, composer, singer, and violinist. She is a founding member of the bands Tin Hat, Rabbit Rabbit, Sleepytime Gorilla Museum, Causing a Tiger, Minamo, Fred Frith's Cosa Brava, the Book of Knots, and 2 Foot

Yard. She has written a song cycle for the International Contemporary Ensemble about dreams, a musical/radio piece for the Rova Saxophone Quartet about the coming of the Industrial Revolution, a piece about communications technology for the Bang on a Can All Stars, an impressionistic audio travelogue for Causing a Tiger, and a song cycle with the poet Rafael Osés called Necessary Monsters based on Jose Luis Borges's Book of Imaginary Beings (1957). Her score for the Folger Shakespeare Library production of Romeo and Juliet was nominated for a Helen Hayes Award. Kihlstedt is currently working on a new song cycle about our changing oceans. In addition to her own albums and those of her various bands/projects, she has contributed to the recordings of Tom Waits, Mr. Bungle, Tracy Chapman, Pretty Lights, Carla Bozulich, and Madeleine Peyroux. She is the vocalist

for Jeremy Flower's song cycle The Real Me and Ben Goldberg's Orphic Machine, and has performed Sarah Kirkland Snider and Ellen McLaughlin's Penelope. She is on the faculty of the New England Conservatory and the Vermont College of Fine Arts.

DARIA MARTIN

Daria Martin's 16mm films aim to create continuity between disparate artistic media (such as painting and performance), between people and objects, and between internal and social worlds. Martin is currently an associate professor and director of artistic research at the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford. Her films have been exhibited in solo shows at ACCA Melbourne; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the New Museum, New York; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Kunsthalle Zürich; MK Gallery, Milton Keynes, England; the Showroom, London; and Tate Britain.

MASSIMILIANO (MAO) MOLLONA

Mollona is a writer, filmmaker, and anthropologist. He is a senior lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at Goldsmiths College, London. He has a multidisciplinary background in economics and anthropology, and his work focuses on the relationship between art and the political economy. He has conducted extensive fieldwork in Italy, the United Kingdom, Brazil, and Norway, looking at the relationship between economic development and political activism through participatory and experimental film practices in favelas and poor neighborhoods. His practice is situated at the intersection of pedagogy, art, and activism. He is a member of the collective freethought, program director of the 2015–17 Athens Biennale, and editor of the Focaal Art and Visual Anthropology (AVA) blog.

JOSÉ MARÍA FRANCOS

Francos studied lighting and set design at Laney College in Oakland back in the early 1980s and has not stopped working since. He has designed for the Oakland Opera, the Oakland Ballet Company, Wallflower Order, Dance Brigade, June Watanabe in Dance, Ellen Bromberg Ensemble, Joanna Haigood's Zaccho Dance Theatre, Robert Moses Kin, Dohee Lee Performance Projects, and Navarrete+Kajiyama Dance Theater. In 2001 he became the production manager and then technical director at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

CREATIVE TEAM

Theresa Wong *music, cello, voice, lyrics, and costume design*
Carla Kihlstedt *violin, voice, and costume design*
Daria Martin *visual projections*
Mao Mollona *visual projections*
José María Francos *lighting design*
Edward Thomasson *graphics and editing*
Carole Kim *live video programming*
Jeanie-Aprille Tang *visual production assistant*
Dominique Persi *make-up*

SPECIAL THANKS

Theresa Wong wishes to thank Isabel Yrigoyen and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and the many friends and supporters who made the creation of this work possible, including: Yaddo Corporation, Roulette, Tzadik Records, Henry & Maria Chu, Denah Bookstein, Anne & Peter Esmonde, Wladimir & Rose Gerela, Sally Fullman, Andrea & Tyko Kihlstedt, Adrian & Amanda Liang, Emily Little, Vamsi Mootha, Regina Schaffer, Christina & Robbie Sheridan, Gerald Rousselle & Meiling Yang, Gary & Jenny Wong, Harriet & Glenn Wong, Joe & Mei Wong, Sabrina Wong and Patrick & Win Yeung. Special thanks to Olympia Dukakis for introducing me to the work of Marija Gimbutas.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

THE CROSSING

Edward Schocker and the Crossing Ensemble

The Crossing creates a new form of ecstatic group improvisation through investigating ancient Asian musical genres such as Japanese gagaku and Korean ritual music. The performance tonight was created through a period of deep development through improvisation and playing. For the past year, this group met regularly to find its own unique sound and group communication. It is consistently developing and changing with each meeting, but the goal—to reach a state of communication with another world—remains the same. *The Crossing* is funded in part by San Francisco Friends of Chamber Music and Zellerbach Family Foundation.

The Crossing is rooted in shinawi, a Korean shamanistic performance practice where musicians reach an ecstatic state as they seek to bridge the material and the spirit worlds. One of the most significant musical characteristics of shinawi is its element of improvisation. As the music accompanies songs and dances performed by shamans during a ritual, sometimes spontaneously, the players must rely on masterful improvisation. The ensemble and the aesthetic for *The Crossing* are built from locally sourced ingredients and sensibilities, slowly churned and developed over time in order to create a unique musical sound and performance style contingent upon the highly developed and spontaneous creativity of its musicians.

Says Edward Schocker: “I am interested in creating an environment where work can be created in a collaborative group manner. In the past I’ve worked with various dance and theater companies and always loved the way they created work. Although there was a choreographer or director, the work was built in a group effort by investigating the creativity and virtuosity, as well as the



Edward Schocker photo by Daniel Leu

deficiencies, of the people performing it. It seemed much more exciting and personal than the traditional (sometimes sterile) composer-ensemble relationship.”

The Crossing's mission is to create new and innovative work that combines traditional Eastern sensibilities with contemporary Western performance practices. By creating pieces in a collaborative group process, the goal is to generate meaningful work that investigates various artistic, social, and spiritual themes. “I believe this project is particularly pushing boundaries in that the goal for the performers is to perform as a group until a connection with ‘another’ world is made,” says Schocker. “Our goal is to create a crossing between the ‘spirit’ and material worlds, a space where audiences feel a direct connection with both.”

This project allows the performers and audience an opportunity to investigate what a “spirit world” means to them. This could be achieved through connecting or remembering ancestors, engaging in meditation or prayer, or allowing the body to physically move as the music takes it. The piece will attract anybody who is seeking to look deeper than our everyday material world. *The Crossing* gives the local community the rare opportunity to see work that brings together ritual and performance—elements that have become separated over the centuries.

ARTIST PROFILES

EDWARD SCHOCKER

Schocker is a composer and performer who creates music with made/found materials and alternate tuning systems. In 1999 and 2000 he was artist in residence at the European Dance Development Center in Düsseldorf, where he took part in and conducted workshops in instrument building and composer-choreographer collaborations. In 2004 Schocker composed music for a UNESCO-sponsored work with Echo Arts, a large bi-communal project in Cyprus that helped build understanding between communities in conflict. Schocker has received artist residencies and commissions from the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; Stanford Lively Arts; the St. Ignatius Choir, directed in San Francisco; Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra, San Jose; and Youkobo Art Space, Tokyo. In 2006 he was awarded the NEA Japan/US Friendship Commission Fellowship to research Japanese musical instruments and tuning systems, and in 2010 he received a six-month residency at Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito. Recently he was an artist in residence at the Paul Dresher Ensemble ARC program. Currently he is an ensemble member of the Thingamajigs Performance Group. The group recently developed and performed a new work with Pauline Oliveros for the Berkeley Art Museum.

THE CROSSING ENSEMBLE

DYLAN BOLLES makes performances with people and environments, many of which involve the design and construction of new musical instruments and the cultivation of co-creative relationships based in listening practice. His activities include a wide range of performance-based collaborations, time-based arts, installations, and sound compositions. These works strive to build communities based in shared temporal experience. Bolles has worked in such venues as the Richmond Art Center; Pro Arts, Oakland; the Exploratorium, San Francisco; Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito; and Lincoln Center, New York. He holds

degrees in music composition from Middlebury College and Mills College, and is a cofounder of Thingamajigs Performance Group, an Oakland-based performance festival and educational nonprofit. Bolles was a doctoral candidate in performance studies at UC Davis. His dissertation project, *Myth of Ten Thousand Things*, engages the practice and theory of artistic collaboration.

DOHEE LEE, born on Jeju island in South Korea, studied Korean dance, music, percussion, and vocals at the master level. Since her arrival in the United States she has been a vital contributor to both the traditional and the contemporary arts landscape of the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. Lee’s work focuses on the integration of traditional forms and contemporary arts through music, movement, images, costumes, and installations. Her distinctive and profound performance style evokes the full spectrum of human emotion—the primordial, futuristic, visible, and invisible realms.

SOOYEON LYUH rigorously trained in court and folk repertoires from a young age, and is known for her masterful performances of new compositions for the haegeum, a traditional Korean string instrument. Lyuh earned her BA, MA, and PhD with highest distinction in Korean musicology from Seoul National University. She served as a lecturer at Seoul National University and a member of the National Gugak Center’s creative music troupe (Gungnip gugakwon changjakakdan), a government organization in Korea. For the past ten years she has performed numerous ensembles and solo pieces of Korean court music, traditional folk music, and especially contemporary music. Currently she is a visiting scholar at the Center for Korean Studies at UC Berkeley. In 2011–12 she was a visiting scholar at the ethnomusicology department, University of Hawaii at Manoa, where she performed with foreign musicians and composers at various concerts and workshops.

SUKI O’KANE is a classically trained mallet percussionist, composer, and instigator working with artists from a



Edward Schocker photo by Daniel Leu

wide array of music, movement, expanded cinema, and public art genres. She has composed for Theatre of Yugen and inkBoat, performs in the ensembles of Dan Plonsey, and is a member of Thingamajigs Performance Group with Edward Schocker and Dylan Bolles. O’Kane has performed live and recorded with She Mob and its side projects: the mad folk duo Junior Showmanship and its alter ego, speed metal Winner’s Bitch. She has performed in realizations of Jon Brumit’s Vendetta Retreat; with Lucio Menegon in his Split Lip, Soundtrack Instrumentals, and Strangelet projects; and with Dohee Lee in realizations of her multidisciplinary performance and installation piece Mago.

ADRIA OTTE is a composer and multi-instrumentalist whose work falls in and between a wide range of idioms. Trained in the Western classical tradition on violin and in bad early-1990s alt-rock on guitar, her musical projects include sound design for dance and video, rock bands, electro-acoustic chamber ensembles, and Korean drumming.

KANOKO NISHI-SMITH is a performer currently based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Though classically trained on piano, and holding a BA in classical music performance from Mills College, her recent interest has primarily been in performing twentieth-century and contemporary musical compositions for piano as well as for koto (Japanese thirteen-string zither), and free improvisation in various contexts with musicians as well as dancers, poets, and visual artists.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A RETROSPECTIVE

Luciano Chessa

LUCIANO CHESSA: *INKLESS IMAGINATION VIII, FOR GEOFFREY HARTMAN (THE BOY OF WINANDER)* 2013

The Living Earth Show -
Andrew Meyerson, *percussion*
The Living Earth Show -
Travis Andrews, *LED counterpoint*

This duo percussion and light projection is based on William Wordsworth’s poem “The Boy of Winander,” which I first discovered thanks to Geoffrey Hartman in 1991. Wordsworth’s poem is already in itself a fully formed musical composition—and a perfect one, for that matter. I felt so intimidated by that splendor that I had to avoid an open-field competition with a work shining that bright. I wanted my piece to have its autonomous life, not claim some other art organism’s life, let alone be a commentary or a mere background.

It would have been too easy a shortcut to have this text be heard and claim the whole experience as my own composition. This was too easy a glory: I had to veil this powerful poem. Though veiled, I still wanted the poem to inform in a subtle way my piece. I wanted this poem to give my piece its shape, so to speak—to be a subterranean, structural foundation.

Inkless Imagination VIII is about my first encounter with this poem. The unforgettable experience of the whistling, and whispy, and whispering sounds of Geoffrey Hartman’s expressive, ancient voice reading of it in the context of a class I took with him at the University of Bologna more than twenty-five years ago is the basis



Luciano Chessa photo by Jamie Lyons

of this composition. By asking performers to whisper to the point of inaudibility, I can remove meaning from a text and still get sound from it—sound that, if it’s not the actual sound a poem makes when it’s read out loud, still is sound derived from and intimately connected (emotionally, structurally, physically) with the text. By doing this I also avoid having to ask (and burden) performers to “act,” and keep their performance focused on sounds (and images) without requesting them to focus on meaning, as well as on the task of delivering a text.

I love whispering because the breathy sound approximates white noise, a kind of sound that plays a role in this piece in the percussion part as well. Finally, I love whispering because it adds mystery to the performance, and functions like an incantation. After all, in my first opera there are long section of choir and solo whispering, and my solo guitar piece Amadou likewise requires the performer to whisper a text to the point of inaudibility.

LUCIANO CHESSA: *PETROLIO. QUATTRO QUADRI DA PASOLINI* 2004

Sarah Cahill, *piano*
Christopher Froh, *percussion*

These four sketches are not meant to be a thorough musical transcription of Pier

Paolo Pasolini’s last novel, *Petrolio* (1975). Instead, they constitute a diary of some of my reactions to the reading of this puzzling, masterful book.

Pasolini left the novel unfinished. It amounts to nothing more than a collection of fragments—some very brief, some that stretch on for several pages—mostly revolving around Carlo di Polis and an alter ego, Carlo di Tetis, who will change gender throughout course of the story. The characters and their behaviors—the political, the social, the ecological, the sexual, even the gender-bending one—are, as is always the case in Pasolini, all allegories. Carlo is the embodiment of the middle-class Italian bourgeois. He works for ENI, the Italian state oil company, during the time of the OPEC embargo against the United States and the consequent international energy crisis of the mid-1970s. Pasolini’s original plan was to include in the book a thorough account of the Italian political structure and its corruption in those years. He never did.

In 1975, when Pasolini was murdered, I was four years old. To me, TV and radio political news were a confused and incomprehensible constant drone. Precisely because of my passive news consumption as a child, I have been attracted to that particular time in political history, attempting, in retrospect, to understand it. My music, however, is not directly “political.” *Petrolio* is not about

putting history on trial, or even pointing to the many similarities between the 1970s and the socio-geo-political scenario of the time when I composed this piece. All can decide on their own what to make of these historical leitmotifs. Instead, I have always been interested in the way in which history (directly or through its interpretation), by affecting our personal lives, changes us.

The “colors” of the score that I have derived from Pasolini are the “melancholic” (which is the dominant one), the “erotic,” the “monstrous,” and the “painful” (isn’t petroleum the most painfully famous liquid of our times?). I have written that the dominant tone of the piece is the “melancholic” because fragments (and fragmentation) surround us. The contemplation of fragments is eminently melancholic. As such, *Petrolia* is an homage to the master of this arabesque-like sensibility, Robert Schumann. Here, all the fragments (including one Anton Webern quote) are presented with little or no development, as if they were floating, in a rhapsodic way.

LUCIANO CHESSA: ACT II, SCENE II: “TO PASS BEFORE THE LAST,” FROM A HEAVENLY ACT
2011

Sanford Smith, baritone
Bethel Community Church Choir—Calvin Lymos, director
Saint Columba Gospel Choir—D. Mark Wilson, director
Cadenza Orchestra—Maya Barsacq, conductor

This is the second scene, second act, of my opera-installation *A Heavenly Act* (about angels inspecting Earth), which was commissioned by SFMOMA in 2011 and premiered at YBCA’s Lam Research Theater in a production by Opera Parallèle conducted by Nicole Paiement. The scene takes place in an archetypal church during the most inspired moment of the Sunday morning service. “To pass before the last” is a contemporary gospel selection that sets Gertrude Stein’s angelic language to earthly devoted music.

LUCIANO CHESSA: AMADOU, DA UN T’ANG DI UCHECHI KALU
2008

Travis Andrews, guitar

A guitar, like a body, is violated. Some nihilism percolates in it—something that may explain this piece’s painful overdose of silence. *Amadou* is based on a poem written by a friend and poet I admire, Uchechi Kalu, who at the time the piece was composed was the only female African poet published in the United States, and who also happened to be—just like the Guinean Amadou Diallo—a West African living in New York.

I can only address Diallo’s tragedy indirectly, filtered as it is through Uchechi’s poem. My focus was never on the news itself, let alone the hysterical mediatic tam tam that followed it. It was on Uchechi’s own process: that of sublimizing Diallo’s killing through stylized, sparse, glasslike poetry. Instead of an angry, wordy text, Uchechi choose the restrained form of the Chinese T’ang, a choice that allowed her to turn resentment into no less poignant lyrical beauty. *Amadou* was originally written for Antonio d’Augello, but was premiered by Travis Andrews at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

LUCIANO CHESSA: BLIND DATE, BASED ON A STORY BY VICTOR J. BANIS
2016 (PREMIERE)

Richard Neveu, video
Mobius Trio, video text
Mobius Trio—Mason Fish, electric guitar and voice
Friction Quartet - Matthew Linder, electric guitar and voice
Robert Nance, electric guitar and voice

Titled *Blind Date*, this work is a meditation on Victor J. Banis’s work and life. A key figure in the development of queer consciousness in the United States, Banis has been called the godfather of modern popular gay fiction. My piece centers on a true story. Banis arranged five years ago

a most singular blind date. A man called him and asked him out for coffee: he was the FBI agent who for more than twenty years followed Banis’s every move in a not-so-far-away time in our history in which authoring queer best-sellers was considered by the US government to be an antiestablishment, criminal act. Banis accepted the coffee invitation.

LUCIANO CHESSA: COME UN’INFANZIA
1986/2011

Friction Quartet—
Kevin Rogers, violin
Otis Harriel, violin
Taija Warbelow, viola
Doug Machiz, cello
Travis Andrews, guitar

This is a string quartet and guitar piece, commissioned and premiered by the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble in 2011. Incorporating materials from a string quartet I composed in 1986 in my hometown of Sassari, Sardinia, it is a musical reflection on the historical Peralta Hacienda in Oakland’s Fruitvale neighborhood. Learning about the Peralta Hacienda Historical Park was just plain fortuitous: when my friend Josh Howes became the Peralta caretaker, that’s when I got my first tour of the park. Discovering that Oakland’s birthplace is in the very center of Fruitvale was something of a revelation.

The departure point for this project, for the music I have written for it, is found in the ruins of the first Peralta adobe house in the center of the park.

I could have not conceived a piece about origins without looking at my own. And I could have not written a piece that would not look, hopeful, at Fruitvale now. Half a meditation on history and half a gentle utopia, *Come un’infanzia* is a piece on Oakland’s infancy, on my infancy—on infancy, period.

LUCIANO CHESSA: TRE DANZE DA SALOTTO
1983/2010

Luciano Chessa, piano
Sarah Cahill, piano

Prepared for Alfonso Alberti, and premiered with him at Milan’s Associazione Musica d’Insieme in 2010, these *Three Dances* for piano four-hands are also a re-elaboration of childhood pieces.

In the *Capriccioso*, the parts of the Primo and Secondo are linguistically homogeneous, while in the *Pigramente* and the *Ballabile* there is a clear heterogeneity: if the part for the Primo is notated traditionally, the part of the Secondo is performative, gestural, abstract. In the *Ballabile*, the Secondo sits in the audience, in the first row. After a few bars the Secondo will stand and go toward the curve of the piano. There, he will observe the Primo perform, and eventually will play directly on the stick the few knocks that conclude his part of the piece.

In the *Pigramente*, the venue lights are dimmed. The Secondo will stand up and slowly wander in the hall with a flashlight, like an explorer (a thief?), shedding light on details: the ceiling’s plaster, cracks in the walls, chandeliers, the audience’s faces, wrists, jewelry, and, if the performance takes place in an actual salon, furniture, ornaments, frames, canvases, chairs, et cetera. The unavoidable sound of footsteps will accompany this exploration.

In the course of it, the Secondo will discover a piano: curious and cumbersome relic, a wreck from nineteenth-century salon culture. The Secondo will walk around the instrument, first with just the flashlight, then with a headlamp as a speleologist would use, to explore the most intimate parts of it, looking for a hidden core. The Secondo will have access and touch these insides, knock on them, lift manually any desired damper to make strings resonate with e-bows so as to disturb the hypnotic quarter-tone flux of the Primo, but all this very gently, with wonder, as if just discovering a mysterious place. Throughout this exploration, the



Luciano Chessa photo by Melesio Nuñez

Secondo will inevitably project shadows and lights on his face, on the face of the Primo, on the audience, and on the piano and its exterior details (legs, tail, pedal, stick, keys) as well as interior (action, holes in the construction, soundboard, strings). The exact itinerary (and thus the duration) of the exploration is stipulated by the two pianists prior to every performance.

LUCIANO CHESSA: RECITATIVO, ARIA E CORO DELLA VERGINE
1995/2007

Amy Foote, soprano
Laurel Duncan-Anderson, gospel soprano

Bethel Community Church Choir—
Calvin Lymos, director
Saint Columba Gospel Choir -
D. Mark Wilson, director

This work is the pivotal scene of my *Urlo impietrato*, begun in 2000 and still in progress, a staged oratorio based on one of Italy's most striking artworks, Niccolò

dell'Arca's *Compianto sul Cristo Morto* (Lamentation Over the Dead Christ, 1463). Instilling musical life to Niccolò's life-size terra-cotta sculpture, this scene portrays the Virgin Mary as both the tragic "Mary of the Seven Pains" and as a universal mother-goddess, filled with eschatological hope.

By harmonizing together, literally as well as allegorically, the performers trained in different styles drive the scene by fusing up to five different vocal and instrumental techniques in a texturally hybrid whole that includes a quote from Richard Smallwood's classic song "Center of My Joy."

Through this personal dialogue between such different cultures as the Italian, the Sardinian, and the African American, my hope is that the work can show a composer interested in the epistemology—rather than the science—of composing. The present work would have never been created had I not attended Calvin Lymos's Gospel Choir class at the University of California, Davis.

ARTIST PROFILE

LUCIANO CHESSA

Luciano Chessa is a composer, conductor, performance artist, pianist, and musical saw/Vietnamese dan bau soloist. His recent record releases include *PETROLIO*, a monographic CD released in 2015 by Stradivarius, Italy's leading classical music label, with performances by Sarah Cahill, Christopher Froh, Living Earth Show, Friction Quartet, and Benjamin Kreith, among others. Recent compositions include *Squeeze! Squeeze! Squeeze!*, a large-scale work on Herman Melville's book *Moby-Dick* written for Living Earth Show, which is in the process of becoming a film directed by John Sanborn, and *A Heavenly Act*, an opera with original video by Kalup Linzy commissioned by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. His second opera, *Cena Oltrenzista nel Castelletto al Lago* (on the subject of fasting, and lasting three days), has been commissioned by the festival Transart and will premiere in September 2016.

Chessa has received multiple commissions for performance projects by Performa in New York and SFMOMA. He presented at Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires in a series of events to celebrate the Art of Noises Centennial; was featured at Performance Studies International at Stanford University; and performed with Ellen Fullman and Theresa Wong at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. In 2014 he offered three concerts at the Guggenheim Museum in New York as part of a retrospective dedicated to Italian Futurism; his voice reading Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's 1909 Manifesto of Futurism and poetry to accompany Jen Sachs's videos was experienced by all of the exhibition's visitors. Two additional videos by Chessa and Sachs were on view at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles for the 2014–15 exhibition *World War I: War of Images, Images of War*.

Chessa's Orchestra of Futurist Noise Intoners (OFNI), which debuted at YBCA's Lam Research Theater, was hailed by the New York Times as one of the best events in the arts of 2009 and has been

touring internationally ever since. OFNI has appeared in sold-out concerts at the Cleveland Museum of Art and Singapore's ArtScience Museum (2015), REDCAT in Los Angeles (2013), and the Berliner Festspiele-Maerzmusik Festival (2011). In 2011 Chessa also conducted the project with the New World Symphony and Lee Ranaldo as part of New York's Performa spectacle to celebrate ten years of Art Basel Miami Beach. A double LP dedicated to OFNI was released on the label Sub Rosa in 2013 to critical acclaim, and sold out in a matter of months.

Chessa's work has appeared more than once in *Artforum*, *Flash Art*, *Art in America*, and *Frieze*, and has been featured in the Italian edition of *Marie Claire* and in *Vogue Italia*. Chessa has been interviewed twice by the British BBC, and has been the subject of two short documentaries, one produced by RAI World (2014) and the other by Vietnamese State TV VTV1 on the occasion of his first trip to Vietnam (2015). Chessa is the author of *Luigi Russolo Futurist: Noise, Visual Arts, and the Occult* (University of California Press, 2012), the first monograph dedicated to Russolo and his Art of Noise.

Currently Chessa teaches at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, serves on the advisory board of Tacet, a research publication dedicated to experimental music published by the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, is a member of the steering committee of the San Francisco Electronic Music Festival, and curates concerts for San Francisco's Italian Cultural Institute. His music is published by Edizioni Carrara and Rai Trade.

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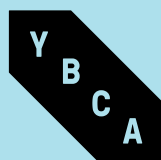
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