



NACUSA CONCERT

New Music for Strings and Piano

By NACUSA SF Composers

Broadcast from the Center for New Music

55 Taylor Street, San Francisco

Saturday, November 21, 2020, 8:00 pm

P R O G R A M

JOHN BILOTTA **Sass**

SHELI NAN **Awaken**

KARL SCHMIDT **Interlude**

ALLAN CROSSMAN **Frequent Flyer**

JOANNE D. CAREY **Piano Trio No.2**

DAVIDE VEROTTA **Trio No.2 (asynchronous)**

JOHN BEEMAN **Luminosity**
movements 3 & 4

ADRIENNE ALBERT **Musescapes**

The Ives Collective

Susan Freier, violin/viola, Stephen J. Harrison, cello, Lori Lack, piano

The Ives Collective

Susan Freier, violin/viola, is a former violinist with the Chester, Stanford and Ives Quartets. Susan served on the Stanford University faculty from 1989 – 1998 after returning to her native Bay Area from Indiana, where she was a member of the faculty at Indiana University. With the Chester she won the Evian, Munich, Portsmouth (England) and Chicago Discovery competitions. Co-Artistic Director of the Ives Collective, she has performed at the Aspen, Schlern, Orfeo, Telluride Chamber and Mendocino Music Festivals.

Stephen Harrison, cello, is co- Artistic Director of the Ives Collective with his wife, Susan Freier. He is a Senior Lecturer on the faculty at Stanford University. He was the founding cellist of the Stanford and Ives String Quartets, and is currently cellist of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. He plays Principal cello at the Mendocino Music Festival and performs regularly at the Telluride Chamber Music Festival. Has recorded for Naxos, New World, New Albion, AIX, and Laurel labels.

Lori Lack, *Piano*, has performed as a soloist and chamber musician throughout Europe and the United States. Most recently, she had a piano trio with Christina Mok and Joanne Lin, was a member of the Laurel Ensemble, and performed with the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra and Gold Coast Chamber Players. As a collaborative pianist, she has performed in recital with many artists including the Alexander String Quartet, the Stamic Quartet, Robin Sharp, Zuill Bailey, Jassen Todorov, Stephen Paulson, and Matt Haimovitz. She has also performed as a member of the SF Symphony, Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, Oakland Symphony, accompanied SF Symphony auditions and served on the faculty of California Summer Music. She is currently a staff accompanist at Stanford University, and works as a freelance collaborative pianist in the Bay Area.

The Composers

Sheli Nan composes music that defies boundaries. She is a composer, teacher, pianist, harpsichordist, percussionist and author. Her Baroque and Classical training coupled with having lived all over the world produce a unique sound; a 21st century harmony. Giving credit to earlier musical iterations what she composes is fresh, invigorating, accessible and moving. Her music is performed locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. She composes from solo harpsichord and piano up to string quartets, chamber music and orchestra. Her choral music encompasses opera, (and librettos) Oratorios and Requiems.

During this smoke filled pandemic time
Awaken easily or uneasily...and
Slowly stretch..and slowly remember....
As the voices begin to intercept sleep and clamor for attention
NO...just let me sleep for another hour...I'm not ready in my predawn state to listen to those insistent voices full of calamity, love and death.....
Please Dear Sleep Goddess - one more hour of forgetfulness, living in that other space as I have lived for half my life
Don't deprive me now when I most need the ease of exhaustion, the kindness of a good dream, the gift of somewhere else.....
Before I awaken with ash in my throat, grit in my eyes, my soul searching out the window looking for flames....
Anxiously understanding there is nowhere to go but within

John G. Bilotta was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, but has spent most his life in the San Francisco Bay Area where he studied composition with Frederick Saunders. His works have been performed by soloists and ensembles around the world including Rarescale, Earplay, the Talea Ensemble, the Washington Square Contemporary Music Society, Chamber Mix, North/South Consonance, Musica Nova, the Avenue Winds, the Presidio Ensemble, the Boston String Quartet, the San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra, the Kiev Philharmonic, the Oakland Civic Orchestra, San Francisco Cabaret Opera, Bluegrass Opera, Boston Metro

Opera, the Thompson Street Opera, New Fangled Opera, and VocalWorks. His music is available on Capstone Records, New Music North, Beauport Classical Recordings, ERMMedia, Bouddi Music/Australia and Navona Records, and are distributed by Naxos. He serves on the Board of Directors for Goat Hall Productions, on the Executive Committee of the Society of Composers, Inc., and is currently President of NACUSA-San Francisco.

Sass, for viola and piano, was written to serve as a lively encore piece for violists. The NACUSAsf CPE Concert will be the premiere performance of the work.

Karl Schmidt is a graduate of Lawrence University, including two years in the Conservatory of Music. During these college years he studied clarinet with Clark Brody, principal clarinetist of the Chicago Symphony, composed incidental music for “The Red Shoes”, and recorded a jazz album, “Windy City Profile”. Music took a secondary role during a 40-plus-year career in educational publishing and technology. Upon retirement he became musically active once again, playing clarinet and saxophone with various orchestras, bands, and ensembles, and composing mainly for small ensembles. His works have been performed by groups such as The Ives Collective, Divisa and Menlo Brass. Two works for symphonic wind ensembles have been performed by the Ohlone Wind Orchestra and the Peninsula Symphonic Band. A member of ASCAP, Karl is active in NACUSA-sf and the Monterey County Composer’s Forum. His works and performances are available on his website: www.karlschmidtmusic.com

Composed in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, I guess this “Interlude” reflects that, like most of us, we are in a space between. I’ll leave it at that and simply let the music speak to you for, as Hans Christian Andersen is reputed to have said, “where words fail, music speaks”.

Allan Crossman. I have had the great pleasure of writing for many soloists and ensembles, including commissions and awards. *Millennium Overture Dance* appears on the eponymous Grammy-nominated album from North/South Consonance; *Music for Human Choir* shared Top Honors at the Waging Peace Through Singing Festival in Oregon; *Sonata fLux*, with pianist Keisuke Nakagoshi, appears on Navona Records; *Icarus*, for piano trio, was just released on Centaur Records. My musical, *The Log of the Skipper’s Wife*, was produced by the Royal Shakespeare Co. at Stratford and the Kennedy Center, with music drawn from Irish/Scottish shanties. Projects have been supported by Canada Council, American Composers Forum, and others. Studies were with George Rochberg and George Crumb at the Univ. of Pennsylvania, and I have taught at Concordia University (Montreal), San Francisco Conservatory, and Wheaton College (MA). www.acrossman.com

Frequent Flyer, cello and piano, was written in part on flights between coasts, and thus its name.

It is divided into three movements: “Vis-à-vis” features rhythmic crossings/overlaps between the instruments and a wide expressive range for both. “Keepsake” is a brief moment of reflection after a sombre event. “Ouija” is an antic that goes from a simple tune to a spinning incantation to a Mad Waltz, then frolic together at the end.

Joanne D. Carey studied with Lou Harrison and Allen Strange at San Jose State University, where she earned a B.A and an M.A. in music composition. For the next decade, she was a visiting composer at Stanford University’s Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA). She composed three computer-generated pieces and wrote several pieces for the radio-baton, a unique controller invented at CCRMA by professor and researcher Max Matthews, performing these pieces with various instrumental and vocal soloists. Among these are “Three Spanish Songs” (inspired by poetry of Pablo Neruda) for soprano and radio-baton that have been performed at computer music festivals in the US, Europe, Mexico and China. She returned to acoustic instruments with a fourth Spanish song, “Solo la Sombra,” for soprano, cello and piano. Recent works include a piece for chamber orchestra and horn and two piano trios.

The central, languid ‘theme’ of Piano Trio No. 2 is a descending minor third followed by four chromatic notes, usually accompanied by three repeated bass notes. This central thematic group is preceded by a long, descending, tonally obscure melody that turns this languid ‘theme’ into a cadential motif. The resulting ‘dual-thematic phrase’ appears three times, while the languid ‘theme’ appears by itself just once in the

middle. Angular motifs and rhythmic motif passages appear in contrasting sections, each introduced by a long trill. Motifs from these ‘themes’ are intertwined and varied throughout the piece in a kind of musical mosaic.

Davide Verotta was born in an Italian town close to Milano and moved to San Francisco in his late twenties. He studied piano at the Milano and SF conservatories, and composition at SFSU and UC Davis. Professor (now emeritus) at UCSF, he is actively involved in the new music scene in SF where he also teaches piano and composition at the Community Music Center and privately. Recent compositions include works for orchestra, string quartet, percussion, two pianos, piano and violin solo, and voice. For more information please visit his web site at www.davideverotta.com.

Trio No.2 is divided in three movements, a brisk *Allegro*, a pensive *Interlude*, and the final *Agitato*. It is an asynchronous composition, one in which the players are not required to play notes according to their vertical alignment in the score. The motivation for the piece arose as a response to shelter-in-place directives put in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which prevent ensemble players from rehearsing and performing together. The solution to this compositional problem looks back to the semi-aleatoric writing from the second half of the 20th century and solves the problem of retaining coordination among players by always identifying a lead player who serves as a reference point for the other players. The result is however often chaotic, perhaps an appropriate metaphor of our time under Covid-19.

John Beeman is a composer living in the San Francisco Bay Area. He studied with Peter Fricker and William Bergsma at the University of Washington where he received his Master’s degree. Mr. Beeman is the composer of three operas, symphonic and chamber works and numerous choral compositions. Works have been performed by the Santa Rosa Symphony, Boston Metro Opera, the Ives Quartet, Paul Drescher, and the Oregon Repertory Singers. He has received awards through Meet the Composer, the American Composers Forum and ASCAP. Currently he is working on an opera about Ishi, the last Native American of his tribe to come out of the wilderness.

Luminosity is a four movement composition for piano trio. Each movement focuses on a different aspect of light. On this concert, only the third and fourth movements will be performed. The third movement begins with ‘Day’s End,’ a musical interpretation of the beautiful changing light at twilight and the promise of things to come. The final section, ‘Phosphorescence,’ was inspired by the glowing photoluminescence seen in ocean waves caused by microscopic plankton.

Award-winning composer **Adrienne Albert** (ASCAP) has had her chamber, choral, vocal, orchestral and wind band works performed throughout the U.S. and across the globe. Her music is widely known for its “melodic and lyrical beauty” and “whimsy and playfulness”. Having previously worked as a singer with composers such as Stravinsky, Bernstein, Glass, and Schuller to name a few, Albert began composing her own music in the 1990s. Her music has been supported by noteworthy arts organizations including the National Endowment for the Arts, ACF, Meet The Composer/Rockefeller Foundation, Subito Awards, MPE Foundation, ACME, and yearly ASCAP awards. She has been composer-in-residence and a visiting composer at numerous colleges and universities in NY, California, Alaska, and Colorado. A graduate of UCLA, Albert studied composition with Stephen Mosko, and orchestration with Albert Harris. Her music is widely recorded, published by Kenter Canyon Music (ASCAP) and can be found on her website: www.adriennealbert.com.

The first movement, “Gee Whiz” is jazz-flavored filled with whimsy and interplay of the violin and cello answering each other’s musical motifs while the piano plays mediator. During the composing of this work, my mother passed away. She was a professional violinist and often played chamber music in our home when I was a child. The second movement titled “For My Mother” became an homage to her. (The third movement “Ode to Piazzolla”, will not be played tonight.) One of the wonderful things about “Musescapes” is that more pieces are in the drawer, and there will be more “Musescapes” to come.

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