

NACUSAsf Presents
Music as Winter Fades

*Instrumental, vocal, and electroacoustic works
written by members of the Bay Area chapter of NACUSA*

8:00 p.m. Saturday, February 11, 2023
Center for New Music, 55 Taylor Street, San Francisco

- Douglas Ovens *Improvisation 10*
or *Why the Beatles Stopped Touring*
Composer on vibraphone and computer
- Monica Chew *Pitter Patter*
Composer at the piano
- Allan Crossman *Florébius, movement 1. Romance*
Monika Gruber, violin; composer at the piano
- Sheli Nan *Black and Blue Times Two*
Charles Ryan, trumpet; Frank Johnson, piano

INTERMISSION

- Mary Fineman Two songs:
Love Song and *Pass This Way*
Composer on piano and voice
- Monica Chew *Glances*
Alisa Rose, violin; composer at the piano
- John Bilotta *Cantus XX (Cantus Viginti)*
Monika Gruber, violin
- Karl Schmidt *CALY Quartet No. 1*
The CALY Quartet: Chris Farrell, Bass clarinet; Ann
Miyada, B-flat clarinet; Laurie Ho, E-flat clarinet and
Yvonne Liu, B-flat clarinet

Douglas Ovens has received commissions from the North/South Chamber Orchestra, Allentown Symphony, Lehigh Valley Chamber Orchestra, Asheville Symphony and many modern dance companies and composed for plays ranging from *The Oresteia* of Aeschylus to Gao Xingjian's *The Other Shore*. Recent works include music for Gertrude Stein's *Listen to Me* and Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*. Of his solo percussion recording, Douglas Ovens – *Seven Improvisations* (N/S 1036), *The American Record Guide* said, "His formidable mallet technique impresses me, as does his rich sense of phrasing and line." *Percussive Notes* wrote, "Ovens is a creative composer and an excellent performer. His ideas flow easily from one instrument to the other and rhythmic and melodic material are always interesting." *The New York Times* said of his piano piece, *Moving Image* it was "a work of special appeal . . . that has an almost conversational shape and pacing and some wonderful textural detail." Dr. Ovens is Professor Emeritus from Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA. He currently resides in Pacific Grove, CA with his wife, Cindy.

Improvisation 10 or Why the Beatles Stopped Touring

Improvisation 10 started out as my first purely "laptop" piece. By that, I mean the music as it comes out of the computer is the piece. The performer's role is to launch different sounds at different points in time, using the laptop keyboard. The program used is Ableton Live which was created to allow this kind of live playing of musical chunks of material (called clips in Live-speak). The clips of music are a combination of MIDI riffs and samples of acoustical instruments, often from orchestral and chamber pieces I have written. The attraction for me of this type of music is that it allows any digital artifact to be available in the musical palette immediately.

The Beatles reference is . . . why carry a bunch of stuff all over the world when you can have so many sounds living in your basement computer and a microwave and TV just upstairs? Aside from the screaming crowds, that is. . . .

Monica Chew is an Oakland pianist and composer. In 2017 she released her first solo album, *Tender and Strange*, featuring works by Bartók, Janáček, Messiaen, Takemitsu, and Scriabin. A "gifted player with an affinity for deeply sensitive expression" (*Whole Note*), she has been featured on radio stations worldwide. She started composing in 2017 and couldn't be happier about it. Prior to 2015, she worked nearly a decade as a principal software engineer on security and privacy at Mozilla and Google. She lives in Oakland with her husband, an 1899 Steinway B, a clavichord, and a disused violin.

Pitter Patter

I wrote *Pitter Patter* after a Ray Bradbury story *The Long Rain*, which takes place on the planet Venus. I wrote the piece to accompany an invented segment from a BBC documentary featuring Sir David Attenborough. Attenborough narrates "Here, we see a group of humans exploring the surface of the planet Venus. Beset by continual rain and hostile wildlife, this intrepid group must seek the shelter of a Sun Dome, or perish. They wear helmets to protect themselves against harshly acidic rainfall. Without the shelter of the Sun Dome, the incessant pitter patter of the rain against their helmets leads to eventual insanity. The incessant pitter patter of the rain. The incessant pitter patter of the rain." One could conceive of this piece as an arrangement of *Itsy Bitsy Spider*.

Glances

Glances is an ongoing exploration of tiny amuse bouches for violin and piano. The first and third are palindromic in nature. They owe a clear debt to György Kurtág, who teaches us that small can be beautiful.

Allan Crossman

I've had the great pleasure of writing for many soloists and ensembles. Millennium Overture Dance is on the eponymous GRAMMY-nominated album from North/South Consonance; *Sonata fLux*, with pianist Keisuke Nakagoshi, appears on Navona Records; the album *Icarus Rising*, with pieces for chamber ensembles and orchestra, came out recently on Centaur Records. The musical, *The Log of the Skipper's Wife*, was produced by the Royal Shakespeare Co. at Stratford and the Kennedy Center, with score drawn from Irish/Scottish chantays.

Florébius

This piece was written for the Eusebius Duo of SF: Monika Gruber, violin, and Hillary Nordwell, piano. The piece is in two movements, *Romance* and *Novelette*—tonight's performance is the first movement. The music has expressive features associated with the characters Florestan (extraverted) and Eusebius (introverted)—often intertwined here and reflected in the fusion of traditional and modern tonality. Parma Recordings; score from Da Vinci Edition.

Sheli Nan composes music that defies boundaries. She is a composer, pianist, harpsichordist, percussionist and author. Her Baroque and Classical training, coupled with her Latin and African training, and having lived in many different countries, has produced a unique sound; a 21st century harmony. Her music is performed locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Her music has been performed in many universities and performance halls around the United States, including New York City, Texas, Florida, Washington State, South Dakota etc. She composes harpsichord and piano music, piano trios, string quartets and quintets, chamber music, guitar duos and solos, brass and sax quartets and quintets, orchestral music, choral music, operas, oratorios and requiems. She has over 100 pieces in the ASCAP library that have been published by PRB Productions, Screaming Mary Music, and Tech-Clazz Publishing Co. Twelve of her CDs can be listened to on Spotify, Roon, etc. For more information visit www.shelinan.com.

Black and Blue Times Two

The beach is sandy. The stars are luminous. The patio is deserted. The trumpet takes a bow. The pianist takes a bow. As the music begins people and animals and the wind come forward starting to move with the beat. As the trumpeter wails and the dancers become one with the music a full moon rises above the sea and all are bowed by this moment of beauty and light. The sea shimmers and the dancers begin once again to throw their arms up in the air, skirts flying as the danzantes reach to catch them upon the wind.

Mary Fineman is an Oakland-based award-winning composer, pianist, singer/songwriter and teacher. Originally from Baltimore, she trained as a classical pianist in Montreal for ten years, studied jazz, and accompanied instrumentalists, singers, and dancers. (also one classical whistler). Her music trajectory changed radically in 2003 after visiting an "energy healer." She suddenly began hearing and writing her own music, with compositions ranging from art song to pop to neoclassical. Performances in the Bay Area include the Paramount Theater, Piedmont Piano Company, Chapel of the Chimes, The Marsh Berkeley, fundraisers, house concerts as well as airplay on classical radio KDFC. In 2022 she received First Place Prize in Music for the Biennial Competition of NLAPW.org. Her work was selected for e4tt.org 2023 Solo Piano concert. She's most proud of her song cycle written for the Oakland Symphony, performed under the late Michael Morgan. Learn more (find lyrics) at www.maryfineman.com.

Love Song and Pass This Way

I've paired these together for this concert . . . one very much about life, the other in the category of a love song. I love both of them performed at the piano, but also hear them for different ensembles, so

hope to be arranging them soon. After writing *Pass this Way*, I learned there are several poems using the same words of the title. My lyrics are not about the fleetingness of life, though, but the hope of making choices different from the ones we're habitually caught in. I've learned that people extract all kinds of meanings from my lyrics, and that's just fine!

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, Floating Opera and VocalWorks. He serves on the Board of Directors for Goat Hall Productions and on the Executive Committee of the Society of Composers, Inc. He is currently president of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of NACUSA.

Cantus XX (Cantus Viginti)

where will the meanings be
when the words are forgotten...
will I see again
where you are
— *W. S. Merwin*

Karl Josef Schmidt is a musician and composer living in Palo Alto, CA. He is a graduate of Lawrence University, including two years in the Conservatory of Music. During his college years he studied clarinet with Clark Brody, principal clarinetist of the Chicago Symphony, and recorded "Windy City Profile" a jazz album. Music took a secondary role as he pursued a 40-plus-year career in educational publishing and technology. Upon retirement he became an active performing musician and composer writing mainly for small ensembles. His works have been performed by groups such as The Ives Collective, Divisa and Menlo Brass. Two works for large symphonic wind ensemble have been performed by the Ohlone Wind Orchestra and the Peninsula Symphonic Band. He is active in NACUSAsf and the Monterey County Composer's Forum. A member of ASCAP, his works and performances are available on his website: www.karlschmidtmusic.com.

CALY Quartet No. 1

Following Chris Farrell's performance of my composition *Big Foot* for bass clarinet and synthesizer, Chris and his father, David, asked me to write a composition for his full clarinet quartet. CALY Quartet No. 1 is that composition. It started as a simple prolog and chorale, but morphed into a prolog/chorale/epilog with several simple motifs being interwoven throughout: a simple 4 bar opening statement followed by descending waterfall-scales by the soprano clarinets against ascending and descending lines from the bass clarinet; a chorale the melody line of which gets integrated into the finale section where the opening motifs are played against lace-like three-against-four arpeggios.

NACUSA is a non-profit organization founded in 1933 by Henry Hadley, originally as the National Association of Composers and Conductors. It is one of the oldest organizations devoted to the promotion and performance of music by Americans. Each NACUSA chapter typically sponsors several concerts each year which feature music by its members. Started by Nancy Bloomer Deussen and John Webber more than twenty years ago, the San Francisco Bay Chapter has evolved into an active organization with a peak membership of seventy five composers. It produces four to six concerts a year in the San Francisco Bay Area.