

NACUSAsf Presents

Not All Who Wander Are Lost

*New music written by members of the
SF Bay Area chapter of NACUSA*

8:00 p.m. Saturday, April 1, 2023
Center for New Music, 55 Taylor Street, San Francisco

Mary Fineman *Watercolor* and
 Who You Were Then and Always (vers. 1)
Monika Gruber, violin
Composer at the piano

Douglas Ovens *Largo*
Monika Gruber, violin
Lori Lack, piano

Monica Chew *Ice Calf*
Composer at the piano

Sheli Nan *Absinthe avec Mes Amis*
Monika Gruber, violin
Lori Lack, piano

~~ *INTERMISSION* ~~

John Bilotta *Elegy*
Monika Gruber, violin
Lori Lack, piano

Robert Stine *Tempore*
1. Tempore 6. Montage Theory
2. Pastorale 7. Barcarolle
3. March 8. Call
4. Image 9. Gigue in the Wind
5. Wolf Walk 10. Music Box
Avenue Winds: Victoria Hauk, flute;
Laura Reynolds, oboe; James Pytko, clarinet;
Daniel Wood, horn; Jarratt Rossini, bassoon

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 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.

Watercolor and
Who You Were Then and Always (vers. 1)

Both of these works were born as piano pieces. I wrote *Watercolor* as a teenager, part of a class assignment, while learning music theory. (I thought I was writing in a particular mode, and realized recently that was not so.) I wrote no further music for many decades. “Who You were Then and Always” was one of the first pieces I wrote as an adult, twenty years ago, when I began ‘hearing things.’ What had been a 12 bar improvisation (that I could never finish) for a modern dance, class became a larger work, now arranged for piano and violin.

Douglas Ovens (b. 1953, Walla Walla, Washington) was educated at San Francisco State University and the University of California, Santa Barbara. His teachers include Ed Applebaum, Peter Racine Fricker, Emma Lou Diemer, Roger Nixon and Henry Onderdonk. His music has been presented in festivals in the United States, Europe, Asia and South America. He has received commissions from the North/South Chamber Orchestra (NYC), the Allentown Symphony, Lehigh Valley Chamber Orchestra, Asheville Symphony and many modern dance companies and has composed music for plays ranging from *The Oresteia* of Aeschylus to Gao Xingjian’s *The Other Shore*, Gertrude Stein’s *Listen to Me* and Alfred Jarry’s *Ubu Roi*.

Ovens’ music is represented on many CDs including 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...” *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.”

Largo for Violin and Piano (2000)

This little “Largo” was languishing on my piano when Jonathan Graber suggested having a piece by a Muhlenberg College composer on his recital at the College. I was happy to oblige by finishing this work for him. It was a kind of counterbalance to other works I had been writing at the same time... those being some very loud and aggressive works for electronic percussion. My *Largo* is quite gentle, a violin rumination over an almost static piano background.

The piece was given its New York City premiere by Deborah Buck and Max Lifchitz on November 11, 2001. I was notified of the performance on September 10, 2001, just a day before the horrible events of September 11. I wrote in my program notes for Nov. 11, “I offer this little piece and tonight’s performance of it as a small elegy for those who were lost and for all who grieve for them.” It holds this elegiac quality for me to this day.

Monica Chew is an Oakland pianist and composer. A “gifted player with an affinity for deeply sensitive expression” (*Whole Note*), she has been featured on radio stations worldwide. Prior to 2015, she worked nearly a decade as a principal software engineer on security and privacy at Mozilla and Google.

Ice Calf

A walrus was found on the coast of Ireland, far from where walruses normally live. The young girl who found the walrus supposed that the walrus drifted over the sea on an iceberg. Although the story is presented as lighthearted in the news, in truth, the walrus most likely will not survive such a drastic change in environment. Walruses need

sea ice to live, and plenty of it. I love the sea and all creatures who live in it. It is impossible to separate this love from thoughts of climate change and its debilitating effects on our planet. The title of this piece, *Ice Calf*, is a reference to both the birth of an iceberg and a young walrus.

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 www.shelinan.com.

Absinthe avec Mes Amis

We meet as friends, on a rainy afternoon, when our interior thoughts press in like the rain on the windowpane and we become the moment... we can only go inward on our instruments as our musical paths lead us toward unbridled imagination. We are friends and as such share a language between ourselves that often becomes mute when others are around. This piece leads in to the place of sharing.

This sonata was composed originally for baroque violin and harpsichord. The reference to musical history and the modern piano is inevitable in our early 21st century. With that in mind, it is entirely appropriate to perform the piece on both modern piano and modern violin.

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.

Elegy — In Memoriam Dale Dombrowski

*May sleep's healing power extend
Through these hours to our friend.
Calmly till the morning break
Let him lie, then gently wake.*

— W. H. Auden, "Nocturne"

Robert Stine (b 1951)

I was born in Greenville S.C. and grew up in Gastonia N.C. I first realized that I wanted to be a composer when I heard Bach's Concerto for 2 violins and orchestra, in a stack of my mother's old records. Soon I had taken up drums (homemade at first), guitar (also homemade), and piano (a neighbor's). I played in various rock groups in school, finally studying composition with Roger Hannay at U.N.C. and Donald Erb at the Cleveland Institute of Music. I currently live near La Honda, California with my family and spend most of my free time composing.

Tempore

in tempore tyrannidis et pestilentiae et belli

'in the time of...' tyranny, plague, war.

'All music is programmatic'... (Did Mahler say this?, I don't know.)

A narrative is always at work, whether the artist knows it or not.

1. *Tempore* 3'51" Originally intended as the 3rd piece in a series for wind quintet.
2. *Pastorale* 1'09" Summer morning by a lake.
3. *March* 7'24" A martial image, a fast march, and an elegy.
4. *Image* 1'36" A still life.
5. *Wolf Walk* 1'36" Predators are watching.
6. *Montage Theory* 1'51" Sergei Eisenstein, Soviet Film Director; 'the collision of independent shots where each sequential element is perceived not next to the other, but on top of the other.'
7. *Barcarolle* 1'05" A children's piano piece, transcribed and slightly distorted
8. *Call* 1'49" A bird call, or a phone call?
9. *Gigue in the Wind* 0'59" Two dancers rehearsing on a wind-swept stage.
10. *Music Box* 0'59" ... and now inside a music box, gradually winding down.

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. NACUSA has chapters in Cascadia, East Coast, Great Plains, Los Angeles, Mid-Atlantic, Mid-South, San Francisco Bay Area, the South East, Southern Oregon, and Texas. 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.