



*The San Francisco Chapter of the National Association of Composers/USA presents a new music recital.*

# New Music for Percussion Duo & Piano

Friday, October 3, 2025, 8 pm

Community Music Center, San Francisco

The Prism Percussion Duo: Divesh Karamchandani & Elizabeth Hall  
with Keisuke Nakagoshi, piano

## PROGRAM

*All These Little Songs I've Sung (a windchime pelog reverie)* Ilana Cotton

*Mermaid Journey* John Beeman

*Enigmatic Fugue* Carleton Macy

*Konnakolada* Alex Shapira

*Glass Jam* Monica Chew

*Music for Sly (and other imaginary friends)* Douglas Ovens

*La Belle Sud* (movements 2, 4, 6, 7) Alon Nechushtan

*Mercury Variations* Davide Verotta



Scan this code for the full program notes and composer biographies.

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 each year in the San Francisco Bay Area. Learn more at <http://nacusasf.org>

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# The Performers

**Prism Percussion** explores the expressive colors of percussive sounds utilizing non-standard instruments and seeks to champion works by Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Women, and Queer composers. The San Francisco-based percussion duo was founded in 2018 by **Divesh Karamchandani** and **Elizabeth Hall**. Their presence on stage is "both musically and visually stunning," affirms Jessica Balik of San Francisco Classical Voice. Karamchandani and Hall's mutual passion for percussion chamber music and collaborating with composers and other musicians led them to create this duo. They enjoy fostering the creation of new works and have commissioned several pieces for the duo as well as having collaborated on many commission consortiums.

**Keisuke Nakagoshi** began his piano studies at the age of ten, arriving in the United States from Japan at the age of 18. Mr. Nakagoshi earned his Bachelor's degree in Composition and Master's degree in Chamber Music from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he studied composition with David Conte and piano with Paul Hersh. Graduating as the recipient of multiple top awards, Keisuke was selected to represent the SFCM for the Kennedy Center's Conservatory Project, a program featuring young musicians from major conservatories across the United States.

Mr. Nakagoshi has performed to acclaim on prestigious concert stages across the United States, including the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, and Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco. He has received training from some of the most celebrated musicians of our time - Emanuel Ax, Gilbert Kalish, Menahem Pressler, Robert Mann, Paul Hersh, David Zinman - and enjoys collaborating with other accomplished musicians such as Lucy Shelton, Ian Swensen, Jodi Levitz, Robin Sutherland, Lev Polyakin, Axel Strauss, Mark Kosower, Gary Schocker and also conductors such as Alasdair Neale, George Daugherty, Nicole Paiement, Michael Tilson Thomas and Herbert Blomstedt. In 2014, he made a solo debut with San Francisco Symphony on Ingvar Lidholm's *Poesis* with Herbert Blomstedt conducting.

In 2009, Keisuke and Swiss pianist Eva-Maria Zimmermann formed ZOFO, a piano duet team commissioning and performing music for piano four hands and their first CD was nominated for Grammy award for best chamber music/small ensemble in 2013. Mr. Nakagoshi is currently Pianist-in-Residence at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and he serves as pianist in the production team for Opera Parallèle.

## Program notes

### **All These Little Songs I've Sung (a windchime pelog reverie)**

**I'lana Cotton**

Since first hearing the world of Indonesian gamelan music, in the basement of UCLA's Schoenberg Hall, I became enamored with both the instruments and the modes of this fascinating music. The pelog tuning is favored by the gamelan degung of the Sundanese people of west Java. I had the good fortune to play in a degung ensemble both at UCLA, and many years later, at Southern Oregon University. I found the mode to be very expressive, and have used it in at least a half dozen of my own works and piano improvisations: *SeaPiece*, *Margaret's Birds*, *Changing Woman*, *Leuwi Asih* and *Song of Spring*. "All these little songs I've sung... a windchime pelog reverie" is just that – a retrospective on some of those musical materials.

**I'lana Cotton** has created works for a broad range of ensembles, from solo piano to small chamber groups to large choral and instrumental ensembles. She holds a Master of Arts degree in composition from the UCLA. A California resident for many years, she was active in multi-art collaborations and performance. Since moving to southern Oregon in 2003, she has written over 35 works for Rogue Valley ensembles, including four commissions for the Siskiyou Singers. The Rogue Valley Symphony commissioned *Cantus*, a large-scale work for orchestra, in honor of its 50th anniversary season, which was premiered in October, 2017. She now lives in Florence, on the Oregon coast. You may visit her website at [www.notimemusic.com](http://www.notimemusic.com)

## Mermaid Journey

**John Beeman**

**Mermaid Journey** (Carla Brooke)

Elizabeth Hall, soprano

A mermaid once broken, floats,  
her mosaic body like treasures scattered.  
Along the sea floor volcanic flows find her.  
It is time to be heard, she knows this now.  
Lavender tears mix with clarity, washing away  
bruises from long ago.

When her voice disappeared so did she.  
Fallen overboard, a surrender to the deep  
underwater breathing, a mermaid's legacy.  
Drifting in and out of lifetimes  
until this moment, so open, so free.

Nothing in the way of receiving gifts  
finally, she is heard from fathoms below,  
silent threats echo then fade.  
Her fearless arms continue  
to swim through imaginary nets, woven with sorrow,  
revealing a treasure of forgotten dreams.  
Reaching out on her own,  
effortlessly seen for who she is, this child of endless life.  
Her voice returns as she sees  
the open sky.

**Mermaid Journey** is a song for soprano, vibraphone, and percussion. The text is from a poem by my wife, Carla Brooke. I chose vibraphone and percussion as accompaniment to complement the expressive, mystical, and somewhat mysterious nature of the poem. The question is: who is the mermaid and how is she transformed in the end?

**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 four 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. He recently completed a two-act opera about Ishi, the last Native American of his tribe to come out of the wilderness.

## Enigmatic Fugue

**Carleton Macy**

In a "normal" fugue the melodic material is the same in all voices. In this 3-voice fugue with one voice being "un-pitched" percussion, the relationship between voices is not obvious. The relationships in this case are rhythmic rather than melodic.

**Carleton Macy's** compositions range from vocal and orchestral, to jazz and music for non-western instruments, often integrating a variety of historic and ethnic stylistic influences. His compositions have been performed throughout the US, in Europe and Asia, and are recorded on INNOVA, DAPHENO, NAXOS, and Latvian Radio. Macy is Professor Emeritus of Music at Macalester College where he taught from 1978 to 2014. In addition to theory and composition courses he directed the MacJazz big band, the Macalester Collegium Musicum, and the Mac New Music Ensemble. Dr. Macy has an active interest in Non-Western music, having served for 25 years as Artistic Director, conductor and sheng performer with the Minnesota Chinese Music Ensemble. He presently performs on recorders, French horn, and percussion with various community ensembles. Macy's music can be seen, heard and downloaded at [www.carletonmacy.com](http://www.carletonmacy.com).

## Konnakolada

**Alex Shapira**

**Konnakolada** is a metaphor for the globalized world we live in. If the name makes you think of a cocktail – you are in the right mindset! And if you are under 21 – no worries, it's not alcoholic – it's a cultural cocktail:

Ingredients:

- Konnakol – vocal percussion – a musical tradition from South India
- misra chapu... – seven beat rhythmic pattern - from East Asia.
- Fibonacci Series: 1,1,2,3,5,8,13 - introduced to the Western world by Italian mathematician Fibonacci around 1200 A.D, but described by Indian mathematician Pingala around 200 B.C, who studied patterns in Sanskrit poetry.
- Lion Dance – Chinese masked dance, accompanied by traditional percussion.
- A meditative walk in the forest.

Preparation:

Mix well and serve chilled with Jazzy inflections.

Alex's music is performed throughout the US and Europe, he is the recipient of several awards such as the Vienna Classical Music Academy Composition Competition, New Ariel Piano Composition Competition, Saint-Saens International Music Competition, Vivaldi International Music Competition, King's Peak International Music Competition, Fidelio International Piano Composition Competition and is featured on the Navona Recordings label and in Jun, an album produced by SkyDeck Music label, which won the 2024 Global Music Award.

He studied piano and composition in Romania at the Dinu Lipatti National College of Art, and continued his musical evolution in Israel and the US under the guidance of composers including Mihael Damian, Jennifer Brandon, and Alan Goldspiel.

He also received comprehensive scientific education, followed by a successful hi-tech career. Alex is now pursuing his passion for music again, creating music at the intersection of East and West, which balances between artistic intuition and structural rigor, always prioritizing the emotional experience. He is leveraging his scientific and high-tech background as well as the understanding of social and corporate processes in shaping new musical structures.

Alex is pursuing creative collaborations with composers, performers and visual artists to expand his creative reach and challenge himself to get out of his comfort zone. He joined the National Association of Composers USA in 2021, and serves on the NACUSA National Board.

Alex lives in Dallas with his wife, they have two adult children and two granddaughters. He likes to hike, jog, meditate and enjoys modern art and a good laugh.

## Glass Jam

## Monica Chew

A little ditty, nothing too serious, for two metallophones.

**Monica Chew** (she/her) is an Oakland composer and pianist who celebrates presenting rarely performed music and new works from around the world. A "gifted player with an affinity for deeply sensitive expression" (*Whole Note*), she has composed since 2017. Prior to 2015, she worked for nearly a decade as a principal software engineer on security and privacy at Mozilla and Google.

## Music for Sly (and other imaginary friends)

Douglas Ovens

I spent the late 60s and the first half of the Seventies as a drummer in Rock bands, Country Western bars, sandwich shops, anywhere someone would pay me to play. This piece for vibraphone, drums/percussion, and piano, draws on those experiences and the music I was moving towards later.

I was struggling to find a title when Sylvester Stewart died in June, and decided I wanted to make it, in part, an Homage to Sly and what Sly and the Family Stone meant to me as a young musician in the early 70s. The piece already had a funk drums part, but I knew I was going to call on the drummer/percussionist to create atmospheres and rhythms which I would characterize as “Cecil Taylor meets Igor Stravinsky.”

The three parts are:

1. Funk Music for Sly
2. Intermezzo (for George Crumb)
3. Fast Music for I.S. (Igor Stravinsky)

These are imaginary friends because, aside from George Crumb, I never met them... but would have liked to.

**Douglas Ovens** presented his “Why the Beatles Stopped Touring” at the Academy of Music and Theater in Tallinn, Estonia in July, 2023. Other recent performances have taken place at the Presidio Chapel and the Center for New Music in San Francisco, CA, with the San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra, New Music Santa Cruz, and Hidden Valley Music Seminars.

His *Largo for Solo Violin and Strings* was recently premiered by the Camerata Chamber Orchestra, Buffalo, NY. He has received commissions from the North/South Chamber Orchestra (NYC), the Lehigh Valley Chamber Orchestra, and the Allentown, Asheville, and University of California, Santa Barbara Symphonies and has composed music for plays ranging from *The Oresteia of Aeschylus* to Gao Xingjian’s *The Other Shore* and Alfred Jarry’s *Ubu Roi*, and has been presented in festivals throughout the US, in Europe, Asia and South America.

His music is represented on multiple CDs including his solo percussion recording, *Douglas Ovens – Seven Improvisations* (N/S 1036). Of that CD, *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.”

Info at: [douglasovenscomposer.com](http://douglasovenscomposer.com)

Videos at: [YouTube@douglasovens8070](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdouglass8070)

## **La Belle Sud (movements 2, 4, 6, 7)**

**Alon Nechushtan**

The piece is inspired by several Latin styles and dances from the Americas and their European roots, yet the majority of these have another essential element: Afro-Cuban influences that range from the migration of culture through the 19th and 20th centuries.

My work does not attempt, in any manner or way, to represent a stylistic accuracy, nor to be examined in an academic discussion geared toward historical preservation and/or idiomatic accuracy, and such possible claims have absolutely no merit. Like a novel, this is a 'pure work of fiction', and stands as inspirational, objective, and nothing more.

**Alon Nechushtan** has written for ensembles all over the globe including The Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra (Philippines), The Tel-Aviv Soloist Orchestra, Musica-Nova Consort and The Contemporary Israeli String Quartet (Israel), The New England Conservatory Composers Orchestra, The New England Wind Ensemble, The M.I.T Festival Orchestra, The Slee Sinfonietta (U.S), The Rutgers Symphony, The Yokohama Festival Orchestra (Japan), The Savassi Festival Ensemble (Brazil).

His Chamber pieces has been commissioned by Barge Music, Ethel, Mise-En Ensemble, New Thread Saxophone Quartet, Imani Wind Quintet, The Israeli Contemporary String Quartet, Con Vivo Music Ensemble, Talujon Percussion Ensemble, Keats String Quartet, Four Corners Ensemble, Fair Trade Trio, Caught in a snare Quartet, Tesla String Quartet, Mivos String Quartet, The New Vocal Ensemble, Ekmeles Vocal Ensemble, Helix Chamber Orchestra, S.E.M Ensemble, Tel Aviv Wind Quintet, Atlanta Contemporary Ensemble, Radnovsky Saxophone Quartet, Manhattan Wind Ensemble & NY Andalus Ensemble.

Alon released 10 CDs under his name on various international labels such as Tzadik, ESP, Naxos, Buckyball (U.S.A), Creative Sources (Portugal), Between the Lines, Challenge (Netherlands), MGN, Enja (Germany), Future Classics (Netherlands), Ayler (Sweden).

Principal composition teachers include: Zvi Avni, Mark Kopytman, Joseph Bardanshvilly (Israel), Michael Gandolfi, Lee Heyla, Lukas Foss (U.S), Masterclasses with Fredric Rzewski, Eric Ewazen, Morton Subotnik, Pierre Boulez, John Harbison, and Louis Karchin (June in Buffalo).

## Mercury Variations

**Davide Verotta**

And there's Mercury  
tied up in ellipses  
frozen in darkness  
glazed by the Sun  
A minor god, they say  
protector of shopkeepers  
of eloquence and richness  
A fellow so far away  
with a weakness for thieves and tricksters

**Davide Verotta** was born in an Italian town close to Milano and moved to San Francisco as an eager twenty-seven-year-old. A professor at UCSF in biomathematics (gasp) for thirty years, he has been actively involved in the SF new music scene for a good twenty, and eventually left math behind to concentrate exclusively on composing. He studied piano at the Milano conservatory ages ago. Composition is more recent, with studies at SFSU, where he earned a MA, and UC Davis. Davide teaches piano and composition privately and at the Community Music Center in SF. He is the current President of NACUSAsf. For more information, please visit his website at [www.davideverotta.com](http://www.davideverotta.com) or his YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/DavideVerotta](http://www.youtube.com/DavideVerotta).