



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

Composers & Friends

Sunday, February 15, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
Center for New Music, San Francisco

PROGRAM

Rapid Promenade James W. Cook

James W. Cook, clarinet

Loretto Alfresco Robert Fleisher

electroacoustic – stereo fixed media

Round the Key Circle We Go! Book 3: Deep Sea Dive Amy Stephens

1. Seahorses Twirling in CM/Am
2. Peppy Porpoises in GM/Em
3. Cute Clownfish in DM/Bm
4. Kelp Cathedral in AM/F#m
5. Beluga Bounce in EM/C#m
6. Sea Turtle Tumble in BM/G#m
7. Jellyfish Drifting in GbM/Ebm
8. Sneaky Starfish in DbM/Bbm
9. Magnificent Orcas in AbM/Fm
10. Enigmatic Octopus in EbM/Cm
11. Crab Walk in BbM/Gm
12. Playful Seal Pups in FM/Dm

Amy Stephens, piano

~ intermission ~

Three (Failed) Enchantments for Flute Davide Verotta

- I. For what I want most to be realized.
- II. For a second choice.
- III. For a little trifle.

Jessie Nucho, flute

Omphalos and Arx from cycle Hidden Lands Ludmila Yurina

Ludmila Yurina, piano

Approaching Mystery: Two Works

Mary Fineman

1. What the Birds Dreamt

2. A Psalm for Hope

Mary Fineman, piano

Altro Alfresco

Robert Fleisher

electroacoustic – stereo fixed media

Monkey's Dumka

Monica Chew

Monica Chew, piano



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>

Benefactors

David Ach

Adrienne Albert

Anne Baldwin

Laura Barton

John Beeman

Brenda L. Bergsrud

John Bilotta

Miriam Blatt

Semyon Bokman

Joanne Carey

Sondra Clark

I'lana Cotton

Allan Crossman

L. Peter Deutsch

Brian Field

Mary Fineman

Robert Fleisher

Gary Friedman

Jacob E. Goodman

Susan and Stephen Harrison

Carolyn Hawley

Corliss Kimmel

Carleton Macy

Sheli Nan

Emily Ray

Roberta Robertson

Andrew Robinson

Karl and JoAnn Schmidt

Allen Shearer

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Kent Smith

Artifex

Greg Steinke

Robert Stine

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Davide Verotta

NACUSA is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax-exempt, and are gratefully accepted by the San Francisco chapter. Please visit <http://nacusasf.org/Donate.html>

Program notes

Rapid Promenade

James W. Cook

James W. Cook is a summa cum laude graduate of the University of Alabama, where he studied composition with C.P. First. In 2023 he received the First Runner-Up Award in the Nancy Bloomer Deussen Young and Emerging Composer Competition.

Loretto Alfresco

Robert Fleisher

Altro Alfresco

Loretto Alfresco is one of three *musique concrète* works created in 1970, all of which (recorded at the base of a tree in rural Wisconsin) transform and expand the solo improvisations of my childhood friend, Tom Loretto (1953–2016), with an array of “found” percussion (pots, pans, pipes, etc.) into a high-speed, high-pitched duet with himself. (My brief garden-hose solo occurs near the midpoint of this 68-second work.) The overdubbing and tape speed manipulation heard in all three “Alfrescos” reflect the influence of Frank Zappa, who I was also privileged to know at the time. Music critic Allan Kozinn has written “*Loretto Alfresco* is endearingly low-tech: its sounds are ... sped up ... and overlaid to create a rich, tactile texture” (The New York Times). Premiered during the inaugural (2009) New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, *Loretto Alfresco* has been heard in more than 60 concerts, festivals, and installations in the U.S., Canada, Switzerland, and the U.K.—most recently during the Queens Tape Music Festival (NYC) in October. *Loretto Alfresco* was released in the inaugural SEAMUS album, *Electro-Acoustic Miniatures 2012: “Re-Caged,”* and more recently on *ILTA* (Neuma, 2022), accompanied by the more extended *Altro Alfresco*.

Altro Alfresco (1970/2010), at just under 6 minutes, is the most extended of three *musique concrète* compositions created from my childhood friend Tom Loretto's found percussion improvisations at the base of a Wisconsin tree more than a half century ago. Additional wind parts include Sharon Mattlin in the distance on soprano recorder, and the deep resonant breaths of Mother Nature. Premiered during the 2011 SEAMUS conference (University of Miami), *Altro Alfresco* has since been heard at the Audiograft Festival (U.K.) and SCI region IV conference (Eastern Kentucky University), 2013; Concrete Timbre Salon 3 concert series (Brooklyn, NY) and Cicada Consort Marathon, to benefit the Michael J. Fox Foundation (University of Alabama), 2016; Forum Wallis Swiss Contemporary Music Festival/Ars Electronica (Switzerland), in the online journal *ink&coda*, 2017; NYCEMF, 2018; the Earth Day Art Model international telematic festival (IUPUI), 2021; and *Ars Acusmatica* (Switzerland), 2024. *Altro Alfresco* can be heard, with *Loretto Alfresco* and my *Five Pieces for Flute and Percussion*, on the recently released *ILTA* (Neuma, 2022), also featuring works by Robert Honstein, David Maki, and Iannis Xenakis.

Robert Fleisher's music has been heard in more than a dozen countries and has been released on as many record labels. Reviewers have called his works “eloquent” (Ann Arbor News), “beautiful chaos” (Musicworks), “astoundingly attractive” (Perspectives of New Music), “ingenious” (The Strad), and “fascinating” (Fanfare). Among other venues, his acoustic and electroacoustic compositions have been heard at Carnegie/Weill Recital Hall, National Sawdust, Roulette, and Symphony Space/Thalia (NYC), the High Museum of Art (Atlanta, GA), Minneapolis Institute of Art (MN), California Institute of the Arts--and at CMS, Electronic Music Midwest, ICMC, NYCEMF, SCI, SEAMUS, and VU conferences and festivals. Fleisher has been awarded several artist residences in

the U.S. and abroad, and has received support from the Illinois Arts Council and the Ruttenberg Arts Foundation. He is also the author of *Twenty Israeli Composers* (1997) and a contributor to Theresa Sauer's *Notations 21* (2009). A native New Yorker, he attended the H.S. of Music & Art, earned a B.Mus. degree with honors at the University of Colorado, and his M.M. and D.M.A. degrees at the University of Illinois. Fleisher is Professor Emeritus at Northern Illinois University, where he long served as Coordinator of the Music Theory & Composition area.

Round the Key Circle We Go! Book 3: Deep Sea Dive

Amy Stephens

This pedagogical suite for intermediate pianists has 12 pieces in 24 keys: each piece modulates between a major key and its relative minor to help students become comfortable with the unique topography of every key center in the circle of 5ths. This piano book has improvisation prompts for every key as well.

Pianist Amy Stephens is a Third Stream, pedagogical & jazz composer for Red Leaf Pianoworks publishing and CCC Music Company. Her solo piano works include *Scenes of San Francisco*, *A Day at the Beach*, *Becoming: Suite for Solo Piano*, and her 4-volume *Childhood Excursions* and 4-volume *'Round the Key Circle* collections. Many of her pieces were selected for the National Federation of Music Clubs' syllabus for annual student festivals. She has also released several albums of her ensemble compositions with her jazz quartet, Amy Stephens Group.

Amy earned two Bachelors, a Masters, & Performer's Certificate in classical & jazz piano from Indiana University. Her mentors include jazz legend David N. Baker & classical master Evelyne Brancart. She has been teaching all styles of piano, composition & theory for 35 years. Her San Francisco studio is filled with musically curious students of all ages. www.amystephens.com.

Three (Failed) Enchantments for Flute

Davide Verotta

Three Failed Enchantments for Flute is divided into three sections. Each section begins with an enchantment, started and ended by air tones (sounds produced without a traditional flute tone, created by blowing across the embouchure hole). Each enchantment is followed by a longer section, representing what happens after the enchantment is cast. The three enchantments are:

- I. For what I want most to be realized.
- II. For a second choice.
- III. For a little trifle.

All the enchantments fail, except possibly the third one.

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 an 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 or his YouTube channel www.youtube.com/DavideVerotta.

Omphalos and Arx (from cycle Hidden Lands)

Ludmila Yurina

The Hidden Lands cycle explores the semi-mythical yet real micronation of Ladonia, located within Sweden's Kullaberg Nature Reserve. Founded by famous Swedish artist Lars Vilks, Ladonia is home to the sculptural works Nimis, Omphalos and Arx, which are constructed from stone and wood and vary in scale and structure.

The sound structures in this cycle are based on the physical dimensions of these sculptures. Elements such height, width, and length are used as a framework for translating spatial form into sound.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ladonia_\(micronation\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ladonia_(micronation))

Ludmila Yurina is a Ukrainian composer and pianist, born in Uzyn, Ukraine. She graduated from Kyiv Music Institute as a pianist and earned her composition degree from the Kyiv State P. I. Tchaikovsky Conservatory, completing her postgraduate studies here as well. Till 2025, Yurina has been an Associate Professor in the Department of Composition at the National Music Academy of Ukraine, specializing in composition, orchestration, and symphonic score reading. Her education includes workshops with renowned musicians such as Helmuth Lachenmann and Wolfgang Rihm (Germany). She has also served as a Visiting Scholar at Stanford University's CCRMA in 2023/24. Yurina has been a guest composer at prestigious institutions worldwide, including the Rheinsberg Music Academy, Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Stuttgart, Texas Christian University, CUNY, and Stanford University. After relocating to Palo Alto, California in 2022, Yurina became an active member of the Bay Area music scene, organizing concerts in San Francisco and Stanford. Her compositions have been performed internationally across Europe, North America, and beyond, collaborating with esteemed ensembles and musicians. Yurina's work is published by leading publishers such as Donemus and Furore Verlag, and she is a member of professional organizations, including NACUSA and ASCAP. She has received numerous awards, including the Lysenko National Award and Fulbright Scholarships, highlighting her significant contributions to contemporary music.

Approaching Mystery: Two Works

Mary Fineman

These two pieces, each had the word Meditation as the original title. I thought I was writing a series of meditations... music that would help reluctant meditators (such as myself) to settle their nervous system, and be at rest!

But I realized that *What the Birds Dreamt* was actually full of small vignettes and I wanted to keep all of them. I learned a thing or two about birds, and realized that this music might possibly mirror the secret life of birds' dreams. Maybe? Maybe?

A Psalm For Hope was conceived almost as a chant, but the meditative quality I sought was soon abandoned, because this piece had much more development and energy brewing, reflecting the vicissitudes of Hope. I felt that Hope, herself needed the assistance of a Psalm for her.

Birds Dreaming... and the elusive notion of Hope... where does that one come from, how do we maintain it? Well, Emily Dickinson said it was the thing with feathers, after all.

Mary Fineman is an Oakland-based singer-songwriter, composer, pianist, and teacher. Originally from Baltimore, she trained as a classical pianist in Montreal, taught at Concordia University, and studied jazz at McGill, accompanying instrumentalists, singers, and dancers.

In 2003, her musical trajectory shifted dramatically after a visit to an energy healer, after which she began hearing her own music and composing and performing across genres—from art song and pop to neo-classical chamber and orchestral works. Venues include the Paramount Theatre, Center for New Music, Piedmont Piano Company, Palo Alto Performing Arts Center, Old First Church, and The Marsh Berkeley, with recent performances in New York, Portland, and Indianapolis.

She is especially proud of her orchestral song cycle, performed by the Oakland Symphony in 2014 with the late Michael Morgan, and by the Community Women's Orchestra in 2024 under Martha Stoddard, with Fineman performing as vocal and piano soloist. Her work has been featured on radio KDFC, Women of Substance Radio, the Internet Archive, and Call for Scores: Solo Piano. She received First Place prizes from the NLAPW Biennial Competition (2022) and the Vinnie Ream Competition (2025).

More information at maryfineman.com | youtube.com/maryfineman

Monkey's Dumka

Monica Chew

I wrote *Monkey's Dumka* in memory of Monkey, a friend's cat. She lived a long life, loved and was loved, and had a lot of fun.

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.