

The Extradition Series

Leaven Community Center, Portland

April 22, 2017

G. Douglas Barrett, *Two Voices*

John Gross (tenor sax), Reed Wallsmith (alto sax)

♦♦♦

Alvin Lucier, *Wind Shadows*

Evan Spacht (trombone) + sine tones

♦♦♦

Takehisa Kosugi, +/-

Matt Carlson, Christi Denton, Branich Howard,
Jesse Mejía (electronics)

♦♦♦

John Cage, *Song No. 85 + Branches*

Michael Stirling (voice) +
Loren Chasse, Matt Hannafin,
Branich Howard (plant materials)

♦♦♦

Toshi Ichihyanagi, *The Field*

Matt Carlson (piano), Loren Chasse (percussion),
Christi Denton (electronics), John Gross (tenor sax),
Matt Hannafin (percussion), Branich Howard
(electronics/percussion), Jesse Mejía (electronics),
Andre St. James (double bass), Evan Spacht (trombone),
Reed Wallsmith (alto sax)

“Ripples in a stream, wind through grass, sunlight reflecting off water tell us something about themselves without intending to do so. All natural sounds are unintentional, but nevertheless press out from themselves messages with no meaning other than what they are or how they are produced.”

— Alvin Lucier (2003)

THE PIECES

Please note that several pieces in this program contain extended silences, during which we ask that the audience also remains quiet.

G. Douglas Barrett, *Two Voices* (2008): *Two Voices* is a graphic score consisting of 27 pairs of horizontal lines, some of equal length and some of different lengths. Two performers are instructed to perform “a sustained tone, sound, action, or noise” that corresponds to the length of their individual lines. Twice in the score, an asterisk appears, signaling that the players can choose a new sound or action. The music throughout is to be “soft, concentrated, for its own sake.”

Alvin Lucier, *Wind Shadows* (1994): Like many of Lucier’s compositions, *Wind Shadows* concerns itself with the physical behavior of sound itself, revealing ephemeral and usually unheard details of space and acoustics. In this work, two pure wave oscillators establish a continuous drone, their extremely close tuning producing a slow wave of acoustical beats that takes five seconds to flow across the room. Against this drone, the trombonist plays long tones in unison or near-unison, each note either calming the oscillators’ beating or creating other, secondary beating patterns. By nature, performances of this and similar Lucier works will always be unique, their acoustical phenomena reacting differently to each room in which they’re performed.

Takehisa Kosugi, +/- (1987): Rigid in structure but open in possibility, +/- consists of 120 symbols — plus signs, minus signs, and short vertical lines — arranged in a grid 12 across and 10 down, presented without instructions of any kind. In creating a version of the piece for four players, we assigned the as-written score to player 1, then rotated the score 90, 180, and 270 degrees to derive scores for players 2, 3, and 4. The symbols are interpreted literally (plus = on / minus = off / line = change), with minimal variation within each cell.

John Cage, *Song No. 85* (1970) and *Branches* (1976): In a 1974 interview, John Cage discussed his idea of simultaneous but independent performance, specifically as it related to his work with choreographer Merce Cunningham: “You don’t have to put the body and spirit together because they are not separate. You don’t have to put the music and the dance together because they are going to be experienced in the same room.” Cage put this philosophy to work in the purely musical sphere as well, using or suggesting the tactic in a number of his performances and scores. In this spirit, we present tonight a simultaneous performance of two Cage compositions from the 1970s. *Branches*, one of Cage’s three “nature pieces” from that decade, sets the scene. An expansion of the earlier solo work *Child of Tree*, it asks performers to make music with plant materials and/or “altered” plant materials. Deliberately opaque instructions lay out a complicated, time-consuming procedure by which musicians consult the *I Ching* to determine alternating durations of sound and silence and instrument choices within the sounded sections. Having demonstrated their seriousness through the ordeal of actualizing Cage’s instructions, musicians are then free to improvise within the *I Ching*–determined parameters. Weaving among these natural sounds, *Song No. 85* is built on syllables extracted from the journals of Henry David Thoreau. To determine the music’s form and pitches, Cage placed an outsized staff over the score to Eric Satie’s *Douze Petits Chorals* and transposed the note heads, creating a new, largely microtonal piece based on the contours of the original.

Toshi Ichiyanagi, *The Field* (1966): Reproduced as part of John Cage’s groundbreaking 1969 book *Notations*, Ichiyanagi’s spare graphic score is both straightforward and enigmatic, depicting 17 shapes and patterns spread across an otherwise blank if highly textured field. A short block of text instructions asks players to “make performing rules by measuring the patterns and the white spaces in the following manner: Distance (time), Area (space), Density (speed or compactness).” For Ichiyanagi — a student of Aaron Copland and John Cage, and an early member of the Fluxus movement — the process of interpreting text scores is an avenue through which performers can spontaneously liberate sound, and in the process liberate the human spirit. “When a composer assigns meaning to each sound and molds [those sounds] into a fixed form, the product is already objectified through one’s own ego. This attitude is like a wall that stands in the way of getting at the essence of self. Self exists without having to manufacture it. . . . If art represents the extreme of human cry, then it is good enough just to cry. If we ascribe meaning to that cry, it ceases to be one.”

THE PERFORMERS

Matt Carlson (electronics, piano) is an electronic music composer/performer from Portland, Oregon. He works with analog modular synthesis, voice, computer control, field recordings, and time delay effects to construct dense clouds of surrealistic electroacoustic sound phenomena. He also performs with bass clarinetist Jonathan Sielaff as Thrill Jockey recording artists Golden Retriever.

Loren Chasse (percussion) is a musician, sound artist, field recordist, and teacher. He has been called "one of the most important international artists working in the areas of environment and sound." Formerly based in San Francisco, in 2010 he relocated to Portland, where he has given solo and duo performances and composed music and sound for TopShake Dance Company and choreographer Katherine Longstreth. Recent recordings include *Characters at the Water Margin* (Unfathomless/Belgium), *The Animals and Their Shadows* (Semperflorens/Russia), and *The Sodden Floor* (Notice Recordings/Portland). lorenchasse.blogspot.com.

Christi Denton (electronics) is a composer and sound installation artist with a degree in music composition from Mills College and a graduate certificate from the Centre de Création Musicale Iannis Xenakis. Christi has built giant chimes as part of the Music for People & Thingamajigs Festival and amplified exhibits at San Francisco’s Exploratorium museum, and her music is part of the exhibit *Six Seconds Around Me* at the Casoria Contemporary Art Museum in Italy. In 2011 and 2012, her work was part of Ten Tiny Dances at the Time-Based Art Festival, where dancers controlled music through light and flex sensors. She competed in the 2012 Guthman Musical Instrument Competition, was in residency at Caldera in 2014, and has played in every Electrogals festival since 1995. www.christidenton.com.

John Gross (tenor saxophone) is known as a musician's musician, and in 1994 was named one of the most meaningful players on the American jazz scene by *Saxophone Journal*. He launched his professional career at age eight in Los Angeles, and earned his jazz improv chops as a teen playing LA clubs with future greats such as Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, Gary Peacock, and Horace Tapscott. At age 16 he hit the road with Harry James, then toured through the early '60s with Lionel Hampton, Johnny Mathis, Stan Kenton, and Woody Herman. From 1967 to 1972 he was a member of the house band at Shelly Manne’s Manne-Hole in Hollywood, playing opposite greats such as Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Bill Evans,

Thelonious Monk, Art Blakey, Muddy Waters, and Abby Lincoln. He toured Europe with Manne in 1970, and toured worldwide from 1979–1983 with the Toshiko Akiyoshi – Lew Tabackin Big Band, including a concert at Carnegie Hall. He's appeared on more than 100 recordings; performed with Stevie Wonder, Gladys Knight, Carol King, Rosemary Clooney, and countless others; taught at universities in the US and Europe; and authored *185 Multiphonics for the Saxophone, A Practical Guide*, published by Advance Music. A longtime Portland resident, John relocated to Vancouver, BC, in 2016. www.johngrossmusic.com.

Matt Hannafin (percussion) is a New York–born, Portland-based percussionist active in experimental music, improvisation, and Iranian classical and traditional music. His teachers included composer La Monte Young, Indian vocal master Pandit Pran Nath, Persian tar and tombak master Kavous Shirzadian, and percussionists Jamey Haddad, Glen Velez, and John Amira. A frequent solo performer, he also maintains duos with oboist Catherine Lee and percussionist Loren Chasse and has collaborated with a wide range of artists, including trumpeter Nate Wooley, turntablist Maria Chavez, shakuhachi player Jeffrey Lependorf, electro-acoustic duo Golden Retriever, and various chamber groups, dancers, Zen flower arrangers, and Persian, Sephardic, Sufi, and Ukrainian ensembles. He is the director of the Extradition Series. www.matthannafin.com/Music.php.

Branic Howard (percussion, electronics) is a composer engaged with sound and how place is inscribed with meaning through its negotiations with its sonic surrounding. He studied with Daniel S. Godfrey and Andrew Waggoner at Syracuse University and with Margaret Schedel and Daniel Weymouth at Stony Brook University, where he is completing a PhD in Composition. He performs as an improviser with electronics and computer, is a member of NYC-based multi-disciplinary performance group Space We Make, and runs Open Field Recording, an on-location mobile recording business. www.openfieldrecording.com.

Jesse Mejía (electronics) is a composer who uses sound, video, generative technology, and custom electronics in contextual relation to bodies and space. Mejía leads CHOIR, an experimental community singing group that re-frames contemporary choral music in new contexts and provides a focused learning environment for singers of all skill levels. He teaches MaxMSP and Interactive Art at PCC and PNCA, makes techno music as

Los Datos, and collaborates regularly with dancers, choreographers, and other artists to create interdisciplinary performance work.

Andre St. James (double bass) is a cornerstone of the rich, thriving Pacific Northwest jazz scene and works regularly with his own ensemble, Mel Brown, The Kin Trio, Gordon Lee, Renato Caranto, and many others. Over the last three decades, St. James has worked with Sonny Rollins, the Harold Land–Blue Mitchell Quintet, Andrew Hill trio and large bands, Bobby Hutcherson, Charlie Rouse, Pharaoh Sanders, James Moody, Alan Shorter, Nancy King, and George Cables. St. James's strong sense of lyricism, buoyancy, and surging momentum, as well as a deep respect for both tradition and innovation, have taken him to both ends of the jazz spectrum — from torch songs and two-beat to bop and beyond. He has enjoyed freewheeling, open-ended avant-garde combustion with keepers of the flame like Judi Silvano / Cathi Walkup / Andrea Wolper, Ron Steen, Joe Pass, Kai Winding, Herb Ellis, Greta Matassa, and Houston Person, as well as trailblazers like Julius Hemphill, Marty Ehrlich, Eugene Chadbourne, Michael White, India Cooke, Kash Killion, Mal Waldron, and Sun Ra, to name a handful. www.andrestjames.com.

Evan Spacht (trombone) completed his undergraduate studies at the Colburn Conservatory School of Music in Los Angeles and mentored under Michael Pisaro, Ulrich Krieger, and Mark Trayle in the Composer/Performer program (Experimental Sound Practices) at CalArts, earning his MFA in 2014. He has performed as a soloist on bass trumpet, euphonium, and trombone with the International Ensemble Modern Academy, Innsbruck, Austria, and performs as half of the minimalist electroacoustic tape experiment duo PANTING. www.deepwhitesound.com/releases/panting.

Michael Stirling (voice) is a disciple of the late master of Indian classical vocal music Pandit Pran Nath (1918–1996). After his Guru's passing he began study and practice with Nathji's senior American student, the renowned composer and performer Maestro Terry Riley. Michael has accompanied Pandit Pran Nath and Mr. Riley in classes and concerts in California, at the Rothko Chapel in Houston, at the dhargha of Sufi Hazarat Inayat Khan in New Delhi, at Diggi Palace in Jaipur, and elsewhere. He has also studied and performed with the great Kirana vocalist Ustad Mashkoo Ali Khan of Calcutta. Among many extraordinary performance opportunities, Michael has had the honor of singing at Shri Krishna Janmashtam Bhoomi, the temple at the birthplace of Lord Krishna in Mathura, India, and accompanying Ravi Coltrane, Pharaoh Sanders, Brandee Younger, and others as part of the Portland Jazz Festival's Universal Consciousness event

honoring the legacy of John and Alice Coltrane. He is currently on the faculty of Lewis & Clark College teaching Hindustani classical vocal music, and also teaches through the Daya Foundation as well as offering private instruction. Michael has served on the Board of Directors of Kalakendra Society for the Performing Arts of India, Living Yoga, and Tarabuq Arts, which supports the Qawwali music ensemble Fanna Fi Allah. His recent recordings include *Deva Loka* (Mississippi Records / Bandcamp) and *Aakash* with Matt Carlson and Doug Theriault (Root Strata). Facebook: Michael Stirling: Cascadia Khyal.

Reed Wallsmith (alto sax) was born and raised in Portland, OR. He performs and composes for Blue Cranes, who have released four albums and several EPs, most recently with the Washington, DC-based creative music label Cuneiform Records. He also works with Battle Hymns and Gardens, Get Smashing Love Power, and AU, and has collaborated with Laura Gibson, Ethan Rose, Holland Andrews, Edna Vazquez, Wayne Horvitz, Peter Broderick, Catherine Feeny, PJCE, Eyvind Kang, and Timothy Young.

THE SERIES

The Extradition Series presents quarterly concerts of composed and improvised 21st-century New Music and works from the 20th century experimental tradition. The series is directed by Matt Hannafin and presented by the Creative Music Guild.

Live sound reinforcement provided by **Tim Westcott**.

Recording services and sound assistance provided by **Branic Howard** (www.openfieldrecording.com).

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www.facebook.com/TheExtraditionSeries

www.youtube.com/c/TheExtraditionSeries

www.creativemusicguild.org

NEXT CONCERT

Saturday, July 22, 2017

Samuel Vriezen, *The Weather Riots*

Matt Carlson (piano), Lee Elderton (clarinet),
Catherine Lee (oboe), plus possible others TBA

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Anastassis Philippakopoulos, *Onissia & "Song 2" from Two Piano Pieces 2006–2008*

Jonathan Sielaff (bass clarinet),
Matt Carlson (piano)

♦♦♦

Giacinto Scelsi, *Ko Tha*

Doug Theriault (guitars)

♦♦♦

Taylor Brook, *Alluvium*

Catherine Lee (oboe),
with electronics by the composer

♦♦♦

Branic Howard, *untitled*

Catherine Lee (oboe),
with electronics by the composer

♦♦♦

Nomi Epstein, *Combine, Juxtapose, Delayed Overlap*

Matt Carlson (electronics), Lee Elderton (soprano sax),
Matt Hannafin (percussion), Branic Howard (electronics),
Reed Wallsmith (alto sax)