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R E C I T A L S E R I E S

— presents —

Tessa Brinckman

with members of the Extradition Ensemble

Performance Works NW, Portland • Feb. 29, 2020

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Tessa Brinckman, *Box | Grown Men Sing*

Tessa Brinckman, bass flute, waterphone
+ fixed audio & video

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Eva-Maria Houben, *Haiku for Seven* (I – II – III – IX – XII – XIV)

Tessa Brinckman, alto flute
Loren Chasse, percussion
Lee Elderton, clarinet
Annie Gilbert, trombone
Matt Hannafin, percussion
Jacob Mitas, viola
Collin Oldham, cello

THE MUSIC

Note: Pieces in this program contain extended silences, during which we ask that audience members also remain silent.

Tessa Brinckman, *Box | Grown Men Sing* (2019): *Box | Grown Men Sing* is meditation on loss, seen through the lens of solitary confinement, its connections to colonization and climate change, and our yearnings beyond dehumanization. Scored for bass flute, waterphone, and fixed audio and video, the piece is constructed from interviews the composer recorded with Steven Czifra, Jerry Elster, and Danny Murillo, survivors of solitary confinement within the US prison-industrial complex. All three men were asked questions about their experience – what they heard, smelled, tasted, dreamed, remembered, resisted, loved – and their recorded words were then woven contrapuntally into a musical dreamscape centered loosely around two poetic aesthetics: *renku* (discussions of experiences shared between different voices) and *litany* (building tension and truth through different kinds of repetitions).

The incarcerations of these three men represent multiple decades of the US “school-to-prison pipeline,” where systems of social control including surveillance, policing, and imprisonment are prioritized over the building of healthy communities and a healthy society. As Danny says, “it’s about money,” and has historical roots that go all the way back to 1492.

Solitary confinement has been described as an “incubator of psychosis.” It is considered a form of torture by the United Nations and violates international norms and treaty law. Nevertheless, keeping people in “the box” is common practice in the US prison system – especially when prisoners represent the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and political activism.

The piece’s fixed audio is based around the three men’s narratives, sampled abstractions of their voices, and found materials, including sounds from Los Angeles industrial parks, an Arabic fruit market in Paris, Oregon bees, a Hawaiian humpback whale, and New Zealand tui birds, all of which function as a multi-valent Greek chorus.

The live bass flute and waterphone were chosen for their unique qualities, and were inspired by recordings of Malian griots, whose music helps their communities remember and regenerate their cultural vision. Both instruments are processed through live electronics.

The video component is another contrapuntal line of dreams and provocations, using material collected from the South African bush, New Orleans, Johannesburg city, and farmers' fields in Northern France, along with videos from the interwebs.

Box | Grown Men Sing was developed during an artistic residency in 2018 at Centre Pompadour in France, and its completion and premiere were commissioned for the Oregon Fringe Festival in 2019.

The piece is dedicated to Danny, Jerry, and Steven, without whom it would not exist, and to all those who have endured solitary confinement.

Eva-Maria Houben, *Haiku for Seven (I – II – III – IX – XII – XIV)* (2003–19): Houben's *Haikus* are a series of spare, sound-focused 45-minute solo pieces, each scored for a different instrument. They may be performed alone, as sequential solos, or overlapping with each other in an ensemble presentation – as we'll be doing tonight. The pieces are arranged in a sequence of time brackets, each of which calls for a specific type of musical action to be executed either throughout the bracket or at any place of the performer's choosing within the bracket. Actions are typically described in terms of tone and affect: "a sound which seems to exist as its own echo," "a sound which appears while disappearing," "empty strings. one sound: one quiet bow. soft." Players are asked to play very calmly, without or nearly without tempo, "taking up time from sound to sound." As part of tonight's realization, the two percussionists will both play from the newest score in the series, *Haiku XIV for percussion (undefined pitches)*, which the composer wrote for Matt Hannafin in 2019.

THE PERFORMERS

Tessa Brinckman (flutes, waterphone) has been described as a "flutist of chameleon-like gifts" and "virtuoso elegance" (*Gramophone*), an "excellent . . . flutist" (*Willamette Week*), and a "highlight of Portland" (*New Music Box*) who "play(s) her instrument with great beauty and eloquence" (*Music Matters New Zealand*). She enjoys a versatile career, having worked in many classical music ensembles and concert series in the United States, South Africa, France, and her native New Zealand. Her orchestral, chamber, and solo music performances include the Oregon Symphony, New Haven International Arts, Festival of New American Music, Britt Festival of Music & Arts, Ashland Independent Film, Oregon Bach, Oregon Shakespeare, Ernest Bloch, Bumbershoot, Oregon Fringe, and Astoria Music Festivals. Per-

forming on concert, alto, bass, contrabass, and baroque flutes and piccolo as well as miscellaneous keyboards, Ms. Brinckman also co-directs the ever-polymathic duo Caballito Negro with percussionist Terry Longshore, and is a member of Collectif Impulsion in France. She has recorded, composed, and performed in major regional theaters across the United States and internationally, as well as for radio, TV, and film. Her co-composition for Tony Award-winning director Mary Zimmerman's *White Snake* was nominated for a Joseph Jefferson Award in 2014.

Over the past 15 years Ms. Brinckman has received local and international grants to commission, curate, and perform unique programs that blend technology, tradition, and contemporary geopolitical themes. The music is often interwoven with her own visual and narrative work, in concert with diverse global artists. Recent collaborations/commissions include taonga puoro master Horomona Horo, live electronics composer Nicolas Vérin, theorbist Caroline Delume, microtonalist Pascale Criton, avant-rock composer Randy Woolf, poets Angela Decker and Tricia Snell, electronic composer Jeremy Mayall, composer-scholar Martin Lodge, multi-media composer Nissim Schaul, and koto player Mitsuki Dazai. Ms. Brinckman's composition for flute and string trio, *Glass Sky* (2005), can be found on the critically acclaimed CD *Glass Sky* and is featured in the South African documentary *Inner Landscapes* (Climax Films), centering around outsider artist Helen Martins and her Owl House creation.

Ms. Brinckman has served on the music faculties of various Oregon universities and colleges and now teaches workshops and master classes in the USA and abroad. Recent solo projects include performance ("When Flutes Spoke Words") and teaching residencies ("Building for the (Un)Reliable Narrator") at Waikato and Canterbury Universities (2017); ongoing recording projects for upcoming CD and video release; and a residency at Centre Pompadour (2018). www.tessabrinckman.com

Loren Chasse (percussion) is a musician, sound artist, field recordist, and teacher. Formerly based in San Francisco, in 2010 he relocated to Portland, where he has given solo, duo, and ensemble performances and composed music and sound for TopShake Dance Company and choreographer Katherine Longstreth. He has released many of his own projects and those of other artists on the labels Unique Ancient Tavern and Jewelled Antler. Recent recordings include *Characters at the Water Margin* (Unfathomless, Belgium), *The Animals and Their Shadows* (Semperflorens, Russia), and *The*

Sodden Floor (Notice Recordings, Hudson Valley, NY). His new project, *So I'm As You'll*, can be heard at lorenchasse.bandcamp.com.

Lee Elderton (clarinet) has been a featured soloist in concerti and solo works, and has toured internationally with the Spectrum Quartet. In addition to his pursuits as a classical saxophonist, he is an avid performer of jazz and improvised music and has recorded with the creative music quartet Return to One, Ocular Concern, and Zappa alumnus Mike Keneally. Recently, Lee has performed with the Portland Wind Symphony, Portland Jazz Composer's Ensemble, Machete Order, Ocular Concern, and the PDX Saxophone Quartet. He has also performed with artists Kim Richmond, Tiger Okoshi, Bud Shank, Ernie Watts, Wayne Horvitz, Roscoe Mitchell, Tim Berne, and William Hooker.

Annie Gilbert (trombone) is a pragmatic experimentalist who explores sound and performance in collaboration. She vocalizes, moves, and plays trombone with playful intensity. Annie studied experimental music and performance art at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA, where multi-disciplinary influences ranged from The Frankfurt School of critical thought to Fluxus, mime, Butoh, multitrack recording, ritual studies, and French language and culture. Annie has sung in choirs and studied circus arts in Toulouse, France. She's been certified as a yoga instructor and is an independent digital project manager. Annie currently plays with improv ensembles Uneasy Trio and ASLO, and is working with Stephanie Lavon Trotter on her new opera about the end of the world.

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, singer Pandit Pran Nath, tar and tombak master Kavous Shirzadian, and percussionists Jamey Haddad, Glen Velez, Layne Redmond, John Amira, and Magette Fall. Active as a solo performer, he's also collaborated with artists such as trumpeter Nate Wooley, turntablist Maria Chavez, oboist Catherine Lee, sound artists Loren Chasse and Branich Howard, and Robert Ashley alumnus Tom Hamilton. Matt is the curator and director of the Extradition Series. www.matthannafin.com

Jacob Mitas (viola) began playing violin at a young age in rural Oregon. While studying ethnomusicology at Bard College in New York, Joan Tower convinced him to switch to viola for the new orchestra. Since, Mitas has composed for and performed viola with bands such as Jackie O Motherfucker, Scott Matthews, Dr. Dog, Larry Yes, Simone White, and extensively with the West Philly Orchestra. He currently lives and works in

Portland, Oregon, where he founded Mitas Bows, a violin repair and bow-making shop. www.mitasbows.com

Collin Oldham (cello) has interpreted contemporary music with the Verge Ensemble in Washington D.C. and with Ensemble Aleph in Paris. He has appeared as a guest performer with the Corigliano and Carpe Diem string quartets, as soloist with composer Samuel Adler at the American Academy in Berlin, and with violinist Lina Bahn at the Gaudeamus festival in Rotterdam. He has performed with the Louisville Orchestra, the Oregon Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra, and the Washington (DC) Opera. He has performed and/or recorded with local rock stars The Decemberists, Richmond Fontaine, and the Portland Cello Project. He studied cello performance at Northwestern University, University of Louisville, Moscow Conservatory, and the University of Southern California. He also studied computer music at Stanford's Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA). www.collinoldham.com

THE SERIES

The Extradition Series presents concerts and recitals that exist at the intersection of composition and improvisation, chance and intentionality, clarity and silence. The series is curated and directed by **Matt Hannafin** and presented by the **Creative Music Guild**.

Recording services and live sound assistance by **Branich Howard** (www.openfieldrecording.com).

Thanks to **Ines Raese** and **Jessica Simpkins** for door management.

Thanks to **Linda Austin** for her efforts in supporting Portland art.

www.extradition-series.com

www.creativemusicguild.org

www.facebook.com/TheExtraditionSeries

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If you enjoy the unique contribution Extradition makes to Portland's musical landscape, please consider becoming a sustaining patron via our crowdfunding campaign at www.patreon.com/CreativeMusicGuild. Any amount helps, but if you give more, you get more: Patrons at the \$10/month level and above get **free admission** to all Extradition Series concerts and recitals as long as their patronage remains active, plus two guest passes annually to other Creative Music Guild events.

We are also seeking individual, small business, and corporate **donors and sponsors** to help support our current and future seasons. To make a one-time donation, go to creativemusicguild.org/donate and mention that your donation should support Extradition. To discuss sponsorships, please write to info@creativemusicguild.org.

Tonight's concert is supported in part by a grant from the



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SUPPORT THE CALIFORNIA COALITION FOR WOMEN PRISONERS

Part of the mission of *Box | Grown Men Sing* is to amplify community voices speaking up about the prison-industrial complex. To this end, Tessa is asking for donations to the California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP), a hard-working women's organization based in Oakland, CA, that challenges the institutional violence imposed on women, transgender people, and communities of color in US prisons. She will be accepting cash donations tonight (which will be sent as one check to CCWP), but you can also contribute digitally via www.womenprisoners.org.