

A Message from the Music Director

Photo by Barbara Rignon



Thank you for joining us for these very special days and nights of music in Ojai. After two years of planning, we've somehow managed to gather dozens of my favorite artists: creative visionaries across generations, geographies, and histories, every one of them beyond category.

I am honored to be a featured composer and pianist throughout this Festival, but I'm even more pleased to report that it's not all about me. You will find many other recurring themes over the weekend: improvisation and "real-time" music making; American experimentalism; radically inventive composer-performers; non-European musical systems; dialogue between the past and the present; collective struggles against racism and oppression; and central to all of this, the legacy of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM).

You will recognize some performers and composers from past Festivals (Aruna Sairam, Tyshawn Sorey, Steven Schick, George Lewis, ICE), and you will meet others whose sounds are new to Ojai (Jen Shyu, Courtney Bryan, and myself). You will meet legendary elders (Zakir Hussain, Muhal Richard Abrams, and Roscoe Mitchell) and younger upstarts (Steve Lehman, Rudresh Mahanthappa, and Cory Smythe). You will hear state-of-the-art interpreters (Jennifer Koh, Brentano Quartet, Claire Chase, and Helga Davis) and wizardly real-time creators (Graham Haynes, Wadada Leo Smith, Nicole Mitchell, and Mark Shim). You will hear music as *object*—composed opuses, whether finished centuries ago or with ink still fresh—and you will hear music as *process*—the sonic choices of networks of actors moving in relation to each other and to their environment. And you might notice that—to some degree, every musical performance contains both of these elements.

By now you've probably heard or read my suggestion that we should replace the word "genre" with "community"—a very different word, concerned not with styles, but with people. I realize that the latter has become a no-less-hackneyed term, wishful and forced, invoked too often. With this distinction I only meant to point out a simple truth about music: In listening to each other, we become connected. When done with patience and compassion, listening can elicit recognition of the other as a version of one's own self. This kind of empathic listening shakes us out of our habitual role as musical "consumers," by reminding us that music is the sound of human action, and not a disembodied substance. It de-centers "the composer" as the primary actor in music, and reorients us instead towards the shared present: being together in time. Empathic listening begins to bring all of us in, music makers and observers alike, towards a shared purpose.

Here we find common cause with Judith Butler's *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, her recent far-reaching meditations on the politics inherent in the act of gathering. When we, as assembled bodies, are able to theorize a common purpose—to reflect upon ourselves, or to dream together, if you prefer—that is the moment that we become political; that is when we are first able to unite around something larger than the self, deeper than aesthetic enjoyment, more urgent than mere curiosity. In this sense, I would add, the moment we commit to empathetic listening, to hearing one another as fellow human beings, we immediately have the potential for not just community, but equality and justice, through direct action and collective transformation. And I am certain that such moments, such purposeful shared presence—a *power stronger than itself*—will emerge, here, this weekend, with and among each other.

So I thank you, once again, for assembling, and for listening.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vijay Iyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "I".

VIJAY IYER



Thursday, June 8, 2017 | 6:00-6:30pm

Libbey Park Gazebo

ICE Pop-Up Concert

GEORGE LEWIS

Emergent

Claire Chase flute

Levy Lorenzo electronics

FREE Event
Open to the public

This work, written for Claire Chase's Density 2036 project, addresses Edgard Varèse's avowed preference for sound-producing machines over sound-reproducing ones by productively conflating the two. The combination of relatively long digital delays, interactive digital spatialization, and timbre transformation translates the fully scored flute material into a virtual, quasi-improvisative orchestral space, creating a dance among multiple flutists following diverse yet intersecting trajectories in which nonlinearity is invoked and uncertainty is assured. "Rather than presenting the redundant truism of a composer 'working with time,' this work is created in dialogue with my deliberate

misprision of Varèse's stated intention for his 1958 *Poème électronique* to introduce 'a fourth [dimension], that of sound projection' to music." Varèse's statement seems to obliquely invoke the notion of spacetime, an interpretation supported by a 1968 account of one of the composer's dreams that suggests the related notion of quantum teleportation as well as the sound of my piece: "He was in a telephone booth talking to his wife, who was at the time in Paris. His body became so light, so immaterial, so evanescent that suddenly, limb by limb, he disintegrated and flew away toward Paris, where he was reconstructed, as though all his being had become spirit."

—MEMBERS OF ICE



Thursday, June 8, 2017 | 8:00-10:00pm

Libbey Bowl

VIJAY IYER

Emergence for trio and orchestra (American Premiere)

Vijay Iyer piano

Stephan Crump bass

Tyshawn Sorey drums

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble

Steven Schick conductor

VIJAY IYER

Trouble for violin and chamber orchestra (World Premiere)

Commissioned by Ojai Music Festival; Cal Performances at UC Berkeley;
and Boston Symphony Orchestra, Andris Nelsons, music director

Prelude: Erasure

Normale

For Vincent Chin

Cozening

Interlude: Accretion

Assembly

Jennifer Koh violin

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble

Steven Schick conductor

INTERMISSION

A Cosmic Rhythm with Each Stroke

Vijay Iyer piano, Fender Rhodes piano, electronics

Wadada Leo Smith trumpet

Special thanks
for underwriting support:

Elizabeth and Justus Schlichting

The world premiere of *Trouble*

National Endowment for the Arts

Join us for Concert Insights:

Host Christopher Hailey

with Vijay Iyer and Wadada Leo Smith,

7:00pm, at the Libbey Park

tennis courts

After the concert, chat with artists and

guests at the outdoor Green Room

in Libbey Park

VIJAY IYER

WADADA LEO SMITH

Vijay Iyer (b. 1971)

Emergence (2016)

Vijay Iyer (b. 1971)/

Trouble (2017)

Wadada Leo Smith (b. 1941)

A Cosmic Rhythm with Each Stroke (2015)

*Or to take up arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them?*

—*Hamlet* III/1

*The only cats worth anything
are the cats that take chances.*

—Thelonious Monk

The Troubles We've Seen (and'll See)

Not so long ago Vijay Iyer said that “to succeed in America is, somehow, to be complicit with the idea of America—which means that at some level you’ve made peace with its rather ugly past.” Iyer went on to urge his audience not to allow this ugly past to determine our future. “What I humbly ask of you, and of myself,” he concluded, “is that we constantly interrogate our own complicity with excess, that we always remain vigilant to notions of community that might—perhaps against our best intentions, sometimes—embrace a system of domination at the expense of others.” This concert explores three contexts for this kind of balanced creative interaction: between differently constituted ensembles; between a soloist and an orchestra; and between two artists across generations.

Iyer has written of *Emergence*:

Emergence is a composition for my group, the Vijay Iyer Trio, plus chamber orchestra. This piece situates our trio’s collaborative improvisational language in the context of a classical ensemble. In juxtaposing the respective powers

of these very different ensembles, and featuring them separately and together, we explore how these two contrasting perspectives on music might coexist. The trio’s specialized skills of internal rhythmic synchronization and organic creative embellishment exist in relief against the orchestra’s interpretive powers, range of colors, and sheer physical spread of sound. In this piece, the trio should not be featured up front in a typical “concerto” formation, but rather in the rear of the orchestra, driving the energy from within the ensemble. At times this “rhythm section” function may challenge the role of the conductor, since the sense of pulse is often guided sonically by the trio. In addition, at certain moments, the orchestral players are asked to make choices in real time, sometimes by listening and responding to each other, which challenges the centrality of the score and the composer. These reconsiderations of authority and agency are key questions for me as a composer and improviser.

Here, as in all of Iyer’s writing, terms like “authority” and “agency,” “community,” and

“collaboration” point to his understanding that music can serve as an analogue and laboratory for social formation and action. We see it in the abstract in *Emergence*; in *Trouble* it is explicit:

“Good trouble,” “necessary trouble”—these are favorite phrases of U.S. Representative John Lewis, referring to the strategies and tactics of the Civil Rights movement and the ongoing struggles for equality and justice in the last six decades.

When meeting with Jennifer Koh over the past year to discuss the details of this piece, I often found it difficult to focus; typically we found ourselves instead recoiling in horror at the events of any given day. This pattern has only intensified since January 20th, as we find our communities, our country, and our planet in greater peril with each passing hour. In creating the piece I found myself both channeling and pushing against the sensation of extreme precarity that pervades our moment.

CONTINUED ►►

THE TROUBLES WE'VE SEEN (AND'LL SEE)

Here, too, is a work that explores the relationship between musical forces, though Iyer sought to avoid the clichés of the virtuoso concerto:

I didn't want to rehash the typical narrative positioning a heroic individual over or against a multitude. Ms. Koh told me that the soloist could instead be viewed as someone willing to be vulnerable, to publicly venture where most people won't, to accept a role that no one else will accept, to bear the unbearable. In other words, the soloist can embody the relationship of an artist to her community: not so much a "leader" or "hero," but something more like a shaman, a conduit for the forces in motion around us.

Although *Trouble* is not a programmatic work it is informed by the experience of its time. "The short second movement," Iyer writes, "is dedicated to Vincent Chin, whose murder in the early '80s signaled an ongoing pattern of violent hate crimes against people of color. His death became a watershed moment for antiracist activism, which is as urgently needed today as it has ever been."

*

"If you look at my collaborations," Iyer said, "it is very much in line with all these others in the sense that it is a building of community, particularly among artists of color. This is what I learned from the example of elder African-American artists,

which is where it is all coming from; to refuse to be silenced."

Wadada Leo Smith has not been silent. He came of age during the 1950s and was a witness of the civil rights battles of the 1960s. His *Ten Freedom Summers* was a finalist for the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in Music, described by the jury as "an expansive jazz work that memorialized 10 key moments in the history of civil rights in America, fusing composed and improvised passages into powerful, eloquent music." The power and eloquence of Smith's voice is felt across a range of activities, including composing, performing, improvising, teaching, and writing. For Vijay Iyer he is "a hero, friend, and teacher" of the past two decades, in particular through his own participation in Smith's Golden Quartet:

The group's broad palette included 'pure' tones and distorted sound, motion and stillness, melody and noise. In quartet performances, Wadada and I often became a unit-within-the-unit, generating spontaneous duo episodes as formal links. In the process, a space of possibility emerged that introduced me to other systems of musicmaking.

Their special chemistry bore fruit in a joint album, *A Cosmic Rhythm with Each Stroke* (2016), which has been lauded by critics for its "charismatic delicacy and subtle force" and an "awareness and acuity between the players that overlaps and breaks away on razor-thin margins."

Like Iyer, Smith believes that music is a reflection of and means for engaging with social and political experience. Music, he has said, "allows the person a moment to reflect minus the distraction of living and being involved in living. And that reflection allows them that little moment with themselves so that they can figure out the best way to maneuver through this maze of a society." People's problems may still be there, he concedes, "but they have experienced a few moments of liberation to give them enough energy to carry on until the next challenge comes."

"You run through your life," he concludes, "and you hope that you can show something that enlightens somebody at some point in time. And if that happens, then that is really leading to a better humanity, a better society."

Words and music for the sea of troubles ahead.

—CHRISTOPHER HAILEY

Friday, June 9, 2017 | 9:00-10:00am

Zalk Theater, Besant Hill School

Daybreak Concert

Solo Rites: Seven Breaths

JEN SHYU

- I. First Breath | World of Home (East Timor)
- II. Second Breath | World of Deep Meditation, Woman, and Fate (Java, Indonesia)
- III. Third Breath | World of Story Told (Taiwan and Vietnam)
- IV. Fourth Breath | World of Ceremony and Mysticism (Ritual World of South Korea)
- V. Fifth Breath | Loss of Macrocosmos (Kalimantan, Indonesia)
- VI. Sixth Breath | World of Return (East Timor)
- VII. Seventh Breath | World of Zero, Epilogue (Anonymous World)

Jen Shyu vocalist/performer

Garin Nugroho director

Special thanks
for underwriting support:

Gary L. Wasserman

The Daybreak Concert
is an **Ojai Member Event**
Please inquire at the Festival Box Office

ZALK THEATER, BESANT HILL SCHOOL
8585 OJAI SANTA PAULA ROAD, OJAI

*The two most important days in your life
are the day you are born and the day you find out why.*

—Mark Twain

*If there's something you don't understand, you have to go humbly to it. [...]
You open your mind. You absorb. You've got to be quiet, you've got to be still to do this.*

—John Coltrane

Quiet Quests

Anyone involved in education these days knows that student bodies are becoming more diverse and dynamic in ways that are transforming the questions we ask and the canons we teach. While we are far from being a post-racial society we are confronted at every turn with the challenges of multiracial cultural identities. Vijay Iyer's Harvard colleague, Henry Louis Gates, has expounded upon the complexities of our genetic and genealogical makeup and corporations have swooped in to assure us that with a swab of DNA and a few hundred bucks we can map out a pie-chart of our ethnic identity that could well add half a dozen new holidays to our calendar. Issues of race, ethnicity, melting pot mythologies, and regressive nativism are part of the American DNA and whereas social and political progress suffer recurring setbacks, music seems to rush ahead toward the promise of a truly global cultural pluralism.

Ask Jen Shyu. Born in Peoria, Illinois, she is the daughter of immigrants: a father from Taiwan, a mother from East Timor of Chinese and West Timorese parents.

Shyu had classical training in piano, violin, and ballet, and at one time aspired to be an opera singer. In college her interests expanded into theater and traditional music and dance from Latin America and Asia, while her performing experience, especially as a vocalist, expanded into jazz and improvisation. Her varied interests received encouragement and formative guidance through her work with alto saxophonist Steve Coleman, with whom she performed and toured from 2003 to 2010 as a vocalist in his band Five Elements. She currently tours with her own ensemble Jade Tongue.

Shyu describes *Solo Rites: Seven Breaths*, directed by renowned Indonesian filmmaker Garin Nugroho, as a solo opera "mainly following the sound of my ancestors." This includes, of course, her immediate family roots in Taiwan and East Timor, but encompasses a decade of field research that also took her to Java, Kalimantan, Vietnam, and South Korea, where she studied not only instrumental and vocal techniques, but language and cultural practices as well.

Shyu conceived *Solo Rites* as a meditation on "the collision between tradition and modernity—manifested through a woman, alone, traveling and seeking threads through the chaos she encounters through her travels." It is a work, she continues, "deeply rooted in tradition and culture and the complexities of relationships between people from different cultures." In her own program notes for *Solo Rites* Shyu has written:

As I traveled to the "cornerest of corners," as I like to say—from the remote mountains of East Timor to the river communities of East Kalimantan, Indonesia—I had the privilege of meeting the most beautiful and sincere people. They claimed to be simple farmers, but they truly were master singers. My first reaction was humility. Next was wanting to lead others to experience the power of the human voice through these masters and to see tradition in a new light. *Seven Breaths'* director Garin Nugroho often mused that the lines between tradition and modernity are so blurry that we'd do

CONTINUED ►►

QUIET QUESTS

best if we did not define ancient versus modern, but rather unite them. In my travels, I was often shown an ancient custom that had been almost forgotten that it seemed like the greatest innovation to my eyes, proving again how much tradition can teach us.

Solo Rites is sung in several languages, although Shyu insists, "I guarantee you'll understand the languages you'll experience through sight, sound, and feeling." "It is a chance," she has written, "for the audience to go on their own personal journey." For Shyu that journey has led to one inescapable conclusion: "We are all human, after all, as the Timorese song toward the end of the show reminds us: 'We are not strangers; we are not separate beings; we are brother and sister only.'"

—CHRISTOPHER HAILEY

Solo Rites: Seven Breaths

Jen Shyu (b. 1978) | all music, text, and translations by **Jen Shyu** unless otherwise noted

I. First Breath | World of Home (East Timor)

(Audio heard: Atauro, East Timor, 2010: Annual festival of San Pedro in Makili village)

Intro to First Breath | The name Daddy gave me — Chiu Yan / The Autumn Goose that flies South / When the cold comes / I will go / But I'll return / Then go again...

"Song of the Passion Woman" | Based on traditional song from Passabe, district of Oecusse, sung by singer Luiza Sufa. Lyrics based on the 13 districts of Timor and villages Shyu is especially close to — Dili, Oecusse / Aileu, Same, Manufahi / Maubisse, Liquica / Makadade, Makili, Passabe / And he asked her before she flew / Don't you want to be free? / 'Cause in his heart he knew / She'd move ways he'd never see / Baucau, Ainaro / Ermera, Bobonaro / Manatutu, Lautem / Viqueque, Cova-Lima, Atauro / He said, Oh, you fall into a place, yes you do / So shouldn't you be free? / 'Cause in his heart he knew / She'd move ways he'd feel — but never see.

II. Second Breath | World of Deep Meditation, Woman, and Fate (Java, Indonesia)

Intro to Second Breath Text: Garin Nugroho — In the land of Jawa / The Selendang, if worn, is more than a cut of cloth, woman / It makes you dance of life and fate

"Aku yang Lahir dari Air Mata (Translation from Indonesian: I Was Born from a Tear)" | Poetry: Slamet Gundono, Music: Jen Shyu & Slamet Gundono — I was born from a tear / I made rain from my sweat / I, shining, upon the wrong turn / But I believe that God was there / In the moment of sadness, I surrender and become dust

"Bawa Sida Asih, Macapat Dhandhangula" | Lyrics: Ki Narto Sabdho, Translation from Javanese: Slamet Gundono, Endang Tri Winarni, & Jen Shyu (Audio heard: Jawa, Indonesia, 2012: Javanese singer [Pesindhen] and teacher: Nyi Ngatirah. Gender: Pak Sutanto. Song: "Ladrang Wilujeng Laras Slendro Pathet Manyura") — My hope, my

beloved / Is that we are always in harmony and unity / At every moment, day or night / Never apart, not even one hair's width / Though far, you are close in my heart / When you're near, you're always my focus / Loving each other for all time / Like two fish swimming side by side / Let us carry out life's obligations together / Sida asih bebrayan / Settling down to love each other

"Para Pembakar Ombak (Burning the Waves)" | Poetry & translation from Indonesian: Dorothea Rosa Herliany — When the horizon turned to rain / the twilight quivered, / the soul's borders / were like vague oceans, / fortunately the boat had a twin / noah and a million faded histories / following the sun's footsteps / from the head of the river / to the sea, / the man came from deep inside the well, / smashed to pieces by limitless longing, / walking in steps which cross the whole day / following a lonely path / why don't you go home, woman, / endlessly walking carrying longing, friend, / shedding the smell of tears / sorrowful grief at the edge of the garden / perhaps she is searching for the heaven / god faithfully places / in the innermost recesses / of the believer's heart / at the body's edge / painful wounds sing / distant like the melody / we hear from the stern / we are tired / father curses us / and we choose to be silent, / as silent / as our memories...

III. Third Breath | World of Story Told (Taiwan and Vietnam)

Pansori epic Simcheongga (Translated from Korean) — They arrive at a certain place. This is the Indang Waters. It is as if a fish and a dragon fought with each other. It is as if thunder fell down. A wind generates waves in the wide sea. A heavy fog moves around. They have a long way to go. It is dark in all four directions. The sky and the sea are desolate. Strong currents hit hard on the bow of the boat. Waves run wildly around the boat. The leader of the sailors and the rest quickly prepare for a rite. They cook a bag of rice. A sound cow is killed. A jar of wine, soups of various colors, and diverse fruit are put in appropriate places. A live pig is slaughtered. It is hung on a big knife. Behold the leader of the sailors. He has Sim Cheong take a bath and sit at the bow. Behold the leader. He

puts on ritual robes and holds two drumsticks. (Audio heard: Taid-ong, Taiwan, 2008: 5-year harvest ceremony in Draba village)

Third Breath Text: Garin Nugroho — Work: your legs that dance, awakening the sleeper / Work: the song that ignites the heart / Work is dance, work is song / Legs, legs, ignite the heart

“Don’t Tell Me” | Poetry by Edward Cheng, translated by Wendy Cheng from Mandarin to English

Don’t Tell me what is love, what is devotion / Because you may not understand all I have experienced in the world / I’m no longer able to recount in detail the story of my life / Now that it’s twilight and there is so much silence / All I can do is look toward the full white moon / Rising in the east / The light blue and pink horizon to the west / Jupiter and Venus gradually brightening / From east to west and all you see in between / That deep black sky is everything I wanted to tell you

IV. Fourth Breath | World of Ceremony and Mysticism. (Ritual World of South Korea)

Binari (Well-Wishing in Korean) Part 1 | Music & Lyrics: tradition from Korea usually sung by male singer. Translation from Korean by Dr. Ju-Yong Ha.

Billions and thousands of stars throughout the universe opened up the sky and the earth was formed.

The peaceful nation was established by Seong Gye Lee, born in the year of tiger in the warm spring.

While he built the capital city in Seoul, the Mountain Samgaksan arose, and the spiritual phoenix was born (which we call “The Phoenix Land.”)

The palace was built above the phoenix land and the six official political positions were arranged.

Oyeongmun [the Five Gates] were built around the city, and provinces and cities were newly created.

The Blue Dragon was represented by the town named Wangsipni, and the white tiger was represented by the eastern fields.

Jongnam Mountain became Ansan while being brightened by the volcanic mountain, Gwanak.

Building a dam blocking the eastern rivers made the Han River surrounding the city of Seoul.

The actual land is made of gold which was offered to the lives of the common people.

The nation is now called Daehan Minguk (Korea).

Let me exorcise all their negative energy, releasing them for better health.

Pansori epic Simcheongga (Translation from Korean) — Three years have passed since Empress Simcheong was in the Sea Palace. Blind Sim, who cries at every thought of his daughter, has become more and more white-haired. She asks the official: “Hey, officer! Ask the blind man about his address, wife, and child.” / Mr. Sim scarcely hears the words of wife and children when tears fall down from his blind eyes. / “Let me report to you, sir. I lived in my hometown, Peach Blossom Village. My name is Sim Hak-gyu. My wife died of a disease after childbirth. I held my daughter, who lost her mom, with a small blanket. I managed to raise her by begging around for milk. Her filial piety was great. She sold herself to sailors at 300 bags of rice to open her father’s eyes at the age of fifteen. She died as a sacrifice at Indang Water three years ago. I haven’t yet opened my eyes. I only sold my daughter. What would be the use of forgiving a parent who sold his child?

Please kill me right away.” Empress Sim is stunned. She pulls the blind away and runs to him without putting on shoes. She hugs her father’s neck. “Oh, father!” Mr. Sim is surprised. “Who is calling me father? Am I your father? What are you saying? My daughter, only child, was drowned to death three years ago. Who is calling me father?” “Oh, father! Haven’t you opened your eyes yet? Your bad daughter, Sim Cheong, came back alive. Father, please open your eyes and take a look at me. Oh, father!” Upon hearing her, Mr. Sim is at a loss for what to say. “What? Are you Sim Cheong? What did you say? What did you say? Am I dead in the Sea Palace? Am I dreaming now? My daughter, Cheong, has died. How can you say she came back here alive? If you are my daughter, let me see you. Let me see my daughter! Oh god! I need eyes to see my daughter. Alas. I feel choked! Let me see my daughter!” Mr. Sim blinks his eyes repeatedly. He suddenly opens them thanks to Buddha.

IV. Fourth Breath | World of Ceremony and Mysticism. (Ritual World of South Korea)

Text: Garin Nugroho — This Bamboo carries you to the heavens / The Bamboo’s roots grab the earth / Grab the bamboo with your hands, / Your work, your song, your dance.

Binari Part 2 (Translation from Korean): Yeombul (Buddhist Chanting) for Blessing. Translation by Dr. Ju-Yong Ha.

Sanggalgyeon (one of the liturgical scriptures of Buddha), identifies that there are hundreds and thousands of negative energies.

Ahhhh hae.....

CONTINUED ►►

SOLO RITES: SEVEN BREATHS

Give love to others ten out of ten.

Bong oh, ehshhhh!

Bong oh, ehshhhh!

I am offering you blessing, good wishes and good fortune.

A blessing for your family;

From the bottom of my heart, I will pray to my deities.

Although you and your family may have some negative energy, if you are joined with me, all the negative energy will disappear!

Although some were born into prosperity, some will die young;

Some people live long without having a prosperous life;

So, I will extend your life as long as a large river, living for a hundred years without illness

V. Fifth Breath | Loss of Macrocosmos. (Kalimantan, Indonesia)

Intro to Fifth Breath Text: Garin Nugroho — The water intervenes / The earth is angry / The wind has no home / Fire runs adrift...

Text from an interview on Kaharingan spiritual beliefs and the environment, conducted by Wendy Miles on June 9, 2012 with the Mantir Adat (traditional leader) of Katunjung village, Bapak Mudin Jaman. Translation from Dayak Ngaju-Kapuas by Rut Dini Prasti H. and Migraliette Urvidya Purbaranti — Mantir: How humans take care of fire is important, they have to give an offering./ Interviewer: How do you give offerings to the fire spirits? / Mantir: By doing the Manyanggar ceremony. Interviewer: But you did Manyanggar and there was still fire? / Mantir: Yes, it's because the spirits were neglected. We were taking from the forest and neglected the ones who live in the fire, the wind, the water, the land, the woods...

(Audio heard: Kalimantan, Indonesia, 2012: "Belian Sentiu" healing ceremony. Singer and Dancer: Pak Renon; Dancer: Pak Marlan. The song is asking permission from the spirits to perform this ceremony)

"She Held Fire" | Inspired by dream of poet-artist Kiki Ze Lara from East Timor — She held Fire / in one hand / and Water in the other / Soon she held the power to command / Fire, Water, and the Land

Fifth Breath Mantra. Text from an interview on the history of land and livelihood changes on the Kapuas River, conducted by Wendy Miles on May 5, 2012 with Mantir Adat Mudin Jaman. Translation by Rut Dini Prasti H. — Mantir: Mountain is part of earth / Wave is part of water / Wind makes the wave on the water

VI. Sixth Breath | World of Return (East Timor)

"Ba O', J (For you, J)" — Poetry and translation from Tetum: Naldo Rei — Day is getting darker / The waves of the sea grow menacing and wild / Savage wind, bitter wind / Leave the world in darkness / Leave story in darkness / Leave me behind in darkness / Will we meet again? / Your shadow always appears in this land / Your footsteps marked the history / In this land / I wait for you

"Song for Naldo: Silenced again, Never again" | Dedicated to Ana Shyu (Jen Shyu's mother) and Naldo Rei, author of Resistance. Last section based on text from Chega! The Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation, Timor-Leste, Executive Summary. Intro: Lakadou song as taught by Mestre Marsal, from Aileu: Translation from Tetum to English by Naldo Rei and Jen Shyu — In the past, at least our ancestors left us culture, and it's like gold ("red money" means gold in Tetum) / You can be big, you can be rich, but at least keep your culture safely in place / My friend was a weaver of words / and he began to write / His voice was young, with the soul of a sage / He wrote of our motherland / and the violation / by a bigger nation /

My friend was a weaver of dreams / I read his words one night / Then fell asleep, my cheek upon the page / with his images haunting me / and my transformation / by his etched reflection / And I dreamed of another time / and I saw her there / My mother / But she looked different, with white skin and short golden hair / but in the dream I knew it was her / In a colorless cell / surrounded by guards with guns / torturous questions / When finally, they pressed her face / into a shield of thorns / a silver shield of thorns / Mother! Then I appeared / like an angel unheard and concealed / and I ran to her / To lay her face / in a veil of ice / Mother! to heal her bleeding brow / I thought she had died / but she survived / to sing the Timorese woman's sorrow: I saw the forceful harvest of sacred hairs / In front of male soldiers. I saw the rape / of pregnant women / including once when a woman was raped the day before she gave birth / To a child of this troubled earth / Silenced again never again / Never again (Song from Aileu continued): We are not strangers; we are not separate beings; we are brother and sister only

VII. Seventh Breath | World of Zero, Epilogue. Anonymous World.

(Audio heard: Atauro, East Timor, 2010: Singer: Maria de Jesus of Makili village. From songs “Rakais” and “Reknote - Tebe Nian”)

Maubisse / There is an opening of land off the Flecha road / Where the earth spreads wide its grassy skins / 'Til it breaks and reveals red clay / Flesh where the wild horses graze / Just beyond / From afar their exhales fluttering / Sighs in the expanse/ I knew not where I was, whom I strove to be / It was cold / Mother, I give you the sign / I grabbed the first warm hand / I rush home, and I see / I was home all the time

*Simcheongga is about a girl named Simcheong and her transformative filial piety to her blind father, Sim Hak-Gyu, usually called Sim the Blind (“Sim-Bongsa”). To help her father regain his sight as a Buddhist monk promised, Simcheong trades herself for 300 bags of rice to merchant sailors looking for a virgin sacrifice to the Dragon King of the Sea, and from their ship she commits suicide by jumping into the ocean. Three years later, the Dragon King, moved by her filial piety, returns her, wrapped in a lotus flower, back to earth where the emperor finds her and makes her his empress. In an effort to find her father, she holds a banquet and invites all the blind. Sim-Bongsa manages to arrive at the banquet and tells his life story before her, which proves his identity. At that moment, Simcheong discovers not only her father, but also the fact that even after three years from when she sacrificed herself, he is still blind. At the shock of hearing his daughter’s voice after believing she had drowned long ago, his desire to see her is so great that he suddenly regains his sight. At that moment, like a wave across the earth, all people and even animals recover from blindness and see the bright world.

GARIN NUGROHO director

Garin Nugroho graduated from the Faculty of Cinematography at Jakarta Arts Institute (IKJ) and from the Faculty of Law at University of Indonesia. His father was an author and publisher who wrote novels in Javanese language. His creative output in the arts is very broad, ranging from making films, commercials, music videos, theater works, installation art, books of cultural communication, to authoring numerous newspaper columns. He is also the founder of JAFF (Jogja-Netpac Asian Film Festival) and the L.A. Indie Movie Festival, both continuing to expand over the past ten years. In April of 2016, French Ambassador to Indonesia Corrine Breuze awarded the honorary decoration of the prestigious award Chevalier dans l’ordre des Arts et Lettres to Nugroho for his dedication to art and literature. He also received the Stella D’atelerie Cavalerie award from the Italian government as well as a President Habibie culture award.

Nugroho is considered a pioneer for the new generation. His films have garnered numerous awards at many international film festivals and have also been presented at films festivals such as Cannes, Venice, and Berlin. The 2014 premiere of *Solo Rites: Seven Breaths* was commissioned by Roulette Intermedium with funds from the Jerome Foundation.



Friday, June 9, 2017 | 11:00-11:30am

Libbey Park Gazebo

ICE Pop-Up Concert

ANTHONY BRAXTON

Composition No. 263 (*Ghost Trance Music*)

(+ 142, 144, 152, 304, & 305) (World Premiere)

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

FREE Event

Open to the public

One of the most prolific composers of the 21st century, Anthony Braxton is fueled by the desire to create non-hierarchical musical systems capable of accommodating the cultural, social, and artistic practices of all performers and “friendly experiencers”—what he call listeners. Through a generative compositional process, Braxton designs interactive performance strategies that call upon players to make their own intuitive decisions. Braxton initially explored the use of such systems in the 1980s, in the context of his long-standing quartet with pianist Marilyn Crispell, bassist Mark Dresser, and drummer Gerry Hemingway. Using various collage techniques, the synthesis of through-composed melodic lines and other written pieces, as well as areas of controlled improvisation, Braxton afforded the quartet opportunities to carve the structure of given performances while the musical material retained its integrity. One specific way Braxton accomplished this was through a series of graphic scores, called *Pulse Tracks*, which he designed to both overlap and connect with his other compositions. This approach afforded Braxton and his colleagues the ability to depart from and return to particular compositions and remain unified as an ensemble.

Braxton expanded these practices over the next decade, further supporting the most fundamental aspect of his work: All of his musical systems are designed to interconnect. *Ghost Trance Music*, a set of

roughly 150 pieces written between 1995 and 2006, was specifically created for this purpose—to provide musical pathways between Braxton’s various compositions. The inspiration for the *Ghost Trance Music* came from Braxton’s study of a post-colonial Native American social justice movement and subsequent ritual called the Ghost Dance. In the late 19th- and early 20th centuries, in an attempt to unify and preserve the traditions remaining to them, surviving members of various Native American tribes would come together and perform transcendental circle dances, ghost dances, in which the living attempted to communicate with their departed ancestors. These ceremonies often lasted hours or days and enabled disparate tribes to establish larger communities. *GTM* emulates the ceremonial and social aspects of the Ghost Dance and serves two purposes: *GTM* spans bridges, connecting Braxton’s previous and current work, connecting them in the same “time-space,” while also supplying an arena in which Braxton curates intuitive experiences for both performers and listeners. In this way, each performance honors the musical experiences of Braxton’s past and present and is a celebration of the creative agency of both the performer and “friendly experiencer.”

A distinguishing feature of all *Ghost Trance* compositions is the *Primary Melody*, a single line of music, uninterrupted by any rests. Depending on the piece, these

lines range in length from two to 80 or more pages, evoking the footfalls of a ritual dance. Each *GTM* composition also contains visual cues suggesting points where a performer might choose to depart from or return to the ritual circle dance. These cues come in the form of a circle, square, or triangle, attached like flags to a particular note in the score, indicating specific places where the performer is invited to travel away from the composition and read from secondary or tertiary scores, or engage in improvisation. These features are simultaneously liberating and limiting, and emphasize the importance of the interpretation of Braxton’s music over its execution. In this way, Braxton empowers musicians to engage with each other in creative arenas beyond their printed parts and ensures that each realization of his music is unique to a particular “time-” or “event-space.”

In this “time-space,” ICE will travel in and out of *Composition No. 263 (GTM)*, exploring compositions *No. 142*, *No. 144*, *No. 152*, *No. 304*, and *No. 305* along our journey.

—ERICA DICKER

This performance was curated by ICE member Erica Dicker with the help of Carl Testa and the Tri-Centric Foundation.



Friday, June 9, 2017 | 1:00-3:30pm

Libbey Bowl

PART I
1:00-2:00pm

EDGARD VARÈSE

Density 2036

Density 21.5

Claire Chase flute

SUZANNE FARRIN

The Stimulus of Loss

for glissando headjoint and recorded ondes martenot

Claire Chase flute

TYSHAWN SOREY

Bertha's Lair

Claire Chase contrabass flute

Tyshawn Sorey drums

VIJAY IYER

Flute Goals (Five Empty Chambers) for tape

Claire Chase improvised flute

PAUCHI SASAKI

Gama XV

Claire Chase bass flute/vocals/speaker dress

Pauchi Sasaki violin/electronics/vocals/speaker dress

MARCOS BALTER

Pan (excerpt)

Claire Chase flute

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

INTERMISSION

Special thanks
for underwriting support:

**Michael Gorfaine
Gorfaine/Schwartz Agency**

Join us for Concert Insights:
Host Christopher Hailey
with Jennifer Koh,
noon, at the Libbey Park
tennis courts

After the concert, chat with artists and
guests at the outdoor Green Room
in Libbey Park

PART II
2:30-3:30pm

TYSHAWN SOREY

The Inner Spectrum of Variables

Movement II

Movement III

Movement IV

Movement V + VI + Reprise

TYSHAWN SOREY DOUBLE TRIO

Tyshawn Sorey drums

Kyle Armbrust viola

Fung Chern Hwei violin

Rubin Kodheli cello

Cory Smythe piano

Chris Tordini bass

Edgard Varèse (1883–1965)	<i>Density 21.5</i> (1936; rev. 1946)
Suzanne Farrin (b. 1976)	<i>The Stimulus of Loss</i> (2016)
Tyshawn Sorey (b. 1980)	<i>Bertha's Lair</i> (2016)
Vijay Iyer (b. 1971)	<i>Flute Goals (Five Empty Chambers)</i> for tape (2016)
Pauchi Sasaki (b. 1981)	<i>Gama XV</i> (2016)
Marcos Balter (b. 1974)	<i>Pan</i> (2017)
Tyshawn Sorey (b. 1980)	<i>The Inner Spectrum of Variables</i> (2015)

$$F = G \frac{m^1 m^2}{r^2} \quad \text{—Isaac Newton}$$

The original is unfaithful to the translation.

—Jorge Luis Borges

Gravitational Attractions

There are pieces that seem to spawn solar systems—works gyrating in their orbit. Bach's Chaconne and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* come to mind and this year's Festival pays homage to both. Another such piece is Edgard Varèse's 1936 *Density 21.5*, whose title refers to the density of platinum, the substance of the newly developed platinum flute. In its very audacity and sonic originality, including extended performance techniques, *Density* opened up a range of possibilities that subsequent composers rushed to exploit.

Claire Chase, who "fell madly in love with the piece" when she was 13, is nudging this process of planet formation with a multi-decade commissioning project, *Density 2036*, that will culminate in the year of *Density's* centennial. But Chase is

ignoring the laws of Newtonian physics (as artists tend to do) by encouraging composers to defy *Density's* gravitational pull and spin out into orbits of their own. For this cycle of commissions Varèse is merely the starting point: "I want every *Density* creation to be unique, new, and unabashedly risk-taking." Moreover, Chase's commissions are conceived as collaborative works, often involving the composers as performers.

In *The Stimulus of Loss* Suzanne Farrin pairs the flute with the ondes martenot, an electronic instrument invented in 1928 (and thus a near contemporary of the platinum flute), which Varèse himself would use in his *Ecuatorial* (1932–34). In Farrin's work, which also contains occasional vocalization, she sought to capture "the magical sensibility that exists

when two people love and respect each other: the disappearance of other and self, the creation that follows emptiness."

Tyshawn Sorey's *Bertha's Lair* accentuates the percussive effects that had been such a striking innovation in Varèse's *Density*. Here drums join the contrabass flute, whose key clicks become musical events through electronic amplification. Iyer's *Flute Goals* features improvised non-pitched sounds produced on five different flutes (contrabass flute, alto flute, flute, piccolo, and ocarina). The composer writes: "[Chase] displayed a different personality on each instrument [...]. I decided I would treat each of her improvisations as an episode. I built a specific environment around each one, and ran them through effects so that her extemporaneous rhythms were triggering

CONTINUED ►►

GRAVITATIONAL ATTRACTIONS

other sounds." In the incantatory *Gama XV Chase* is joined by the Peruvian composer and violinist Pauchi Sasaki; both performers play, vocalize, and generate sound through their movements via interactive dresses, each comprising 96 speakers.

Marcos Balter's 90-minute *Pan* conjures the mythical god of nature, who, as the composer writes, was at once "pure and impure, wise and childish, a victim and a villain." The work is in three parts: "The Death of Pan," a cry of agony and somber lament; "Pastoral," describing Pan's tragic love for the nymph Syrinx; and "Syrinx," the sonic space that unfolds as the god explores the wondrous properties of the pan flute. We'll hear an excerpt from the work's conclusion, "a kind of 21st century, crowd-sourced Greek chorus," in which performers are placed within the audience "playing all manner of ocarinas, toy xylophones, bamboo wood chimes, and tuned wine glasses and bottles," some of which are "processed electronically and sent spinning, like spirits, around the hall."

If the commissions of *Density 2036* take us a long way from *Density 21.5* they also illustrate the point that every act of creative homage transforms the object of its awe. Varèse's piece is no longer what it was, which is to say that *Density*, like every great work of art, is always seeking new contexts. One might say the same of today's composers.

In his album *a Cosmic Rhythm with Each Stroke*, which is dedicated to the memory of the Indian artist Nasreen Mohamedi, Vijay Iyer quotes a passage from her diary: "To grasp one's entire heritage with intuition, vision and wisdom—with a total understanding of the present." This thought might well describe Tyshawn Sorey. The scope of his musical universe seems limitless and as a composer and improvising performer he covers the widest possible range of our contemporary musical culture.

Sorey is generous in acknowledging his debts, both to contemporary artists—composers and performers such as Butch Morris, Harold Budd, and Anthony Braxton—and to traditions of world music, including Ethiopian modal jazz and klezmer, as well as to Western art music traditions. He describes *The Inner Spectrum of Variables* as a work dealing with variables of improvisation and structure, capable of being performed as a conducted improvisation or following prescribed directives in the score, with or without improvisation.

The Inner Spectrum of Variables is a work of mercurial sweeps of style, mood, and harmonic and rhythmic languages that can seem like a palimpsest of music's own memoir fueled by what Martin Luther King, Jr. called "the fierce urgency of now." As a result, Sorey's many allusions seem less like quotations than nebulae swirling around a new gravitational axis. The piece is scored for a double trio consisting of a combo of piano, bass, and drums together with a classic string trio of violin, viola, and cello, and combines both composed and improvisational sections guided by the conductor. Violinist Fung Chern Hwei has said of Sorey: "One cannot fathom how deep Tyshawn's mind is, both intellectually and intuitively. The music is music from the future, music that people have never heard of, or imagined to exist." Or perhaps the air of another planet.

—CHRISTOPHER HAILEY

Friday, June 9, 2017 | 7:00-10:00pm

Libbey Bowl

7:00-7:50pm

Ojai Talks

**The Association for the Advancement
of Creative Musicians: Ongoing impact**

A panel discussion moderated by Ara Guzelimian with
Muhal Richard Abrams, Claire Chase, George Lewis,
Roscoe Mitchell, and Tyshawn Sorey

BREAK

8:00-10:00pm
GEORGE LEWIS

Afterword, an opera (West Coast Premiere)

ACT I

Scene 1 Down South

Scene 2 Up North

Scene 3 The Cemetery

Scene 4 First Meeting

Scene 5 Naming

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Scene 1 Ariae

Scene 2 The Split

Scene 3 Death

Scene 4 Paris

Scene 5 Afterword

Joelle Lamarre soprano

Gwendolyn Brown contralto

Julian Terrell Otis tenor

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Sean Griffin director

Steven Schick conductor

Narda E. Alcorn production stage manager

Daniel Schlosberg répétiteur

Sean Griffin and Catherine Sullivan costumes



Special thanks
for underwriting support:

Jill and Bill Shanbrom
Colburn Foundation

After the concert, chat with artists and
guests at the outdoor Green Room
in Libbey Park

Founded on the South Side of Chicago in 1965, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians has long played an internationally recognized role in American experimental music. The AACM's unique combination of artistic communitarianism, personal and collective self-determination, and ardent experimentalism animates the *Afterword* project.

However, *Afterword* is not a history of the AACM, but a "Bildungsoper"—a coming-of-age opera of ideas, positionality, and testament. The challenge here was to create an opera around a collective that remains noted for its diversity of approaches to creative practice, while eschewing direct character representation of AACM artists. The opera eschews a conception in which fixed, authorial characters pose as what Michel Foucault calls "historical figure[s] at the crossroads of a certain number of events" in favor of having music, text, and movement deploy a tricksterish displacement of character onto metaphysical collectivities. Sung and spoken voices, instrumental music, and movement become heteroglossic avatars, in a process described by Toni Morrison and others as the expression of a community voice. In some scenes, that voice presents remembrances and testimony; in others, clashes between subject positions allow audiences to eavesdrop on history as it is being made in real, human time, bringing us face to

face with contingency, empathy, and wonder. In a sense, the community voices adopted by the avatars could also constitute externalizations of the conflicts within a single complex human life. The opera takes its title from the concluding chapter of my history of the AACM, *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (University of Chicago Press, 2008). The "Afterword" chapter selected quotes from nearly 100 interviews with AACM members to fashion an imagined intergenerational dialogue about overarching social, cultural, and aesthetic issues that the organization and its individual members faced over the decades.

Afterword's direction and movement take their form from the libretto, which is drawn from the interviews I conducted for the book, as well as transcripts of audio recordings of formative AACM meetings made by Muhal Richard Abrams in 1965 and 1966. The opera includes remembrances from family histories and the Great Migration, daily observations jotted down in diaries, and descriptions of Paris in the wake of the tumultuous events of 1968. The lively dissonance of the orchestration functions as a musical commentary on these recounted historical and psychic moments, encouraging us to listen in on the fast-moving, creative sonic imagination animated inside the minds of the characters as they calculate their collective creative powers.

As the action unfolds, we witness young black experimentalists interrogating many issues: of power, authority, identity, representation, culture, economics, politics, and aesthetics; self-fashioning, self-determination, and self-governance; personal, professional, and collective aspiration; race, gender, and sexuality; and tradition, innovation, change, spiritual growth, death, and rebirth.

Building upon AACM ideas that are now part of the legacy of experimental practice constitutes a vital touchstone for operatic experience. The goal of *Afterword* is to combine aesthetic exploration with critical examination of the multiple, overlapping, and fundamentally human motivations that affect us all.

Scene Synopses

Act I

Scene 1: Down South

Reminiscences of black life in the Southern United States, from antebellum days to the early Great Migration and the first stirrings of the Civil Rights movement. We hear stories of loss and dispossession—but also of magic, mojo, mirthful tall tales, and self-determination.

Scene 2: Up North

The founding and original members of the AACM were all born between 1927 and 1932. These children of migrants from the South who settled in Chicago

CONTINUED ►►

GEORGE LEWIS *Afterword, an opera*

found matters very different indeed from the glowing reports of life in the North they had received from their relatives and friends who were already there. Despite their struggles with housing, money, drugs, and much more, we hear strains of nostalgia for community, and the desire for a better life.

Scene 3: The Cemetery

A depiction of the hoodoo-tinged origin story of the AACM. Meeting in a local Chicago cemetery, two future AACM founders express sadness at the state of their community, and end with a call for action in which the interlocking powers of music and collective action would establish a better future for themselves and their community.

Scene 4: First Meeting

The sung texts are drawn largely from the audio recording of the founding AACM meeting in May 1965. As the musicians speak frankly among themselves, hopes, fears, aspirations, and a gradual self-realization dovetail with a general understanding, sung by the tenor, that music composed by the members themselves could play a major role in reconnecting them to their ancestors, as well as fostering social, political, and cultural change.

Scene 5: Naming

This naming meeting, drawn from an audio recording of another 1965 AACM meeting, highlights the role played by spiritual conceits such as numerology in establishing a baseline of understanding, as the participants declare themselves ready to move forward to advance each other as well as their music.

Act II***Scene 1: Ariae***

The basis for this scene is an unpublished autoethnographic journal/narrative by pianist Claudine Myers, written in 1966 and set on a Saturday afternoon at the Abraham Lincoln Center in Chicago, where the fledgling AACM held meetings, rehearsals, and concerts. "I was writing it as it was happening," Myers recalled, and what we hear from the central figure, the soprano, is a kind of agape, as the AACM members go about their creative business in an optimistic and playful spirit, intertwined with explorations of the new individual and collective identities they were forging.

Scene 2: The Split

Drawn from an audio recording of another 1965 AACM meeting, we witness a breakdown of the sense of camaraderie shown in the earlier scene. In a heated debate over the age-old conflict between tradition and innovation, positions are staked out, and resolution is not forthcoming despite a too-hasty adjournment.

Scene 3: Death

The untimely passing of two AACM members in the prime of their youth is remembered and mourned. The feeling turns toward an understanding that life is fleeting, and that mobility is power.

Scene 4: Paris

The initial wonderment of living in France gradually becomes tempered by the realization that like the North, Paris was not necessarily a race-neutral haven for these young black experimentalists. As their pleas for expanded understanding sometimes go unheard, local difficulties in bridging cultural difference, combined with a lack of interest in assimilation, lead to their realization that the world is open for them to explore.

Scene 5: Afterword

The AACM members take stock—of their achievements, and of the problems remaining to be faced. Again, music, collectivity, ethical action, and self-realization become keys to the future.

—GEORGE LEWIS



Friday, June 9, 2017 | 10:30-11:30pm

Libbey Bowl

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH *Partita in D minor, BWV 1004*

Allemanda

Corrente

Sarabanda

Giga

Ciaccona

MISSY MAZZOLI

Dissolve, O My Heart

LUCIANO BERIO

Sequenza VIII

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN

Lachen Verlernt

Jennifer Koh violin

Special thanks
for underwriting support:

Esther and Tom Wachtell

FREE Ticketed Event

Please visit the Box Office

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
Missy Mazzoli (b. 1980)
Luciano Berio (1925–2003)
Esa-Pekka Salonen (b. 1958)

Partita in D minor, BWV 1004 (1717–20)
Dissolve, O My Heart (2010)
Sequenza VIII (1976)
Lachen Verlernt (2002)

All a musician can do is get closer to the source.

—John Coltrane

*Everybody is influenced by everybody
but you bring it down home the way you feel it.*

—Thelonious Monk

Memory and the Moment

Varèse and Bach. Both challenge—the one to imagine the future, the other to ponder the past. Through each, Claire Chase and Jennifer Koh seek to invigorate the present. Two composers, two performers, two concerts with one simple premise: Music begets music.

In *Bach and Beyond*, a series of concerts and recordings, Koh took the six sonatas and partitas as her starting point. They are a touchstone for violinists, not least for the technical feat of conjuring knotty contrapuntal textures on unaccompanied violin, including three daunting fugues in the sonatas and the formidable chaconne that concludes the second partita. In this concert the focus is on this D-minor chaconne, a variation form in which a recurring succession of harmonies serves as a foundation for elaboration above. The movement begins and ends with austere statements of the underlying four-bar chord pattern with its descending four-note bass line and comprises 64 variations of enormous variety and technical difficulty, their grand arc dwarfing in both length and emotional depth the preceding traditional dance movements.

So what does a performer, a composer take from this? It is not merely wonder at this compendium of technical hurdles or the sovereign mastery of craft; it is the sense of Bach as summation, not just of his era, but of what music can be. His mastery was born of reverence for the past, his difficulties of trust in the capacities of musicians of the future. So performers and composers take their pick among manifold challenges: technical control, polyphonic complexity, bold architecture, drama, and emotion, the very weight of history.

Between 1958 and 2002 Luciano Berio wrote 14 *Sequenzas*, each dedicated to exploring the potential of unaccompanied instruments, including the human voice. Berio, acknowledging his debt to Bach, described *Sequenza VIII* for violin as a kind of chaconne. The underlying pattern centers on two notes, A and B, that are heard at the outset and, as the composer writes, “act as a compass in the work’s rather diversified and elaborate itinerary, where polyphony is no longer virtual but real, and where the soloist must make the listener constantly aware of the history behind each instrumental gesture.”

Esa-Pekka Salonen’s *Lachen Verlernt* (Laughing Unlearned) owes a double debt. The work draws its title from the ninth movement of Arnold Schoenberg’s *Pierrot lunaire*, “Prayer to Pierrot,” in which the narrator cries out: “Pierrot! I have unlearned my laughter! O give me back, horse-doctor of the soul, snowman of poetry, Serene Highness of the moon, Pierrot—my laughter!” For Salonen this represented a metaphor for the performing artist: “a serious clown trying to help the audience to connect with emotions they have lost, or believe they have lost.” *Lachen Verlernt* is likewise a chaconne in which a recurring harmonic progression supports ever-changing surface activity, beginning with a lyrical, expressive melody. “Gradually the music becomes faster and more frenzied,” Salonen writes, “until it develops an almost frantic character, as if the imaginary narrator had reached a state of utter despair. A very short Coda closes this mini-drama peacefully.”

Finally, Missy Mazzoli, one of Koh’s commissioned composers, takes, quite literally, the chaconne as her starting point:

CONTINUED ►►

MEMORY AND THE MOMENT

Dissolve, *O My Heart* begins with the first chord of Bach's Chaconne, a now-iconic D-minor chord, and spins out from there into an off-kilter series of chords that doubles back on itself, collapses and ultimately dissolves in a torrent of fast passages. The only direct quote from the Partita is that first chord, which anchors the entire piece even as it threatens to spiral out of control. The title comes from an aria in the St. John's Passion, but has many potential interpretations.

In all three pieces there is a keen awareness of being part of the chaconne's legacy, the movement

Berio has called "that musical apex" where "past, present, and future violin techniques coexist." Certainly this sense of coexisting temporalities has something to do with the way in which the chaconne's extraordinary content is wedded to its form, and the form to the very essence of musical experience. Music is a living thing, experienced over time, during which we carry the memory of what has gone before as the music unfolds. The chaconne, with its evolving variations over an unvarying pattern, is the perfect embodiment of the meeting of memory and the moment, the confluence of past and present, whose intersection is the incubator of the future.

—CHRISTOPHER HAILEY



Spontaneous Combustion

New Music Festival

January 19 - February 10

Seattle
Portland
Eugene
Sacramento
San Francisco

Featuring
Seven Up-and-Coming New Music Specialists
Performing the Music of Living Composers!

SCNMF.org

Ojai
San Diego
Los Angeles
Palm Springs
Santa Cruz/San Jose



Saturday, June 10, 2017 | 9:00-10:00am

Zalk Theater, Besant Hill School

Daybreak Concert

NICOLE M. MITCHELL

Engraved in the Wind (American Premiere)

- I. Blue Mountain
- II. Cave of Forgotten Spring
- III. Glacier Wall
- IV. Beehive
- V. Highlight at the Waterfall
- VI. Forest Family

Nicole M. Mitchell flute

NICOLE M. MITCHELL

They Witnessed an Unfolding (World Premiere)

- I. Intent
- II. Instability
- III. Trigger
- IV. Amalgamation
- V. Clearly Itself

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Irishia Hubbard choreography/dance

NICOLE M. MITCHELL

Inescapable Spiral (World Premiere)

Nicole M. Mitchell flute

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

UCI Creative Music Ensemble

Special thanks
for underwriting support:

Cathryn and Thomas Krause

This concert is an
Ojai Member Event
Please inquire at the Festival Box Office

ZALK THEATER
BESANT HILL SCHOOL
8585 OJAI SANTA PAULA ROAD, OJAI

Nicole M. Mitchell (b. 1967) *Engraved in the Wind* (2013)
They Witnessed an Unfolding (2017)
Inescapable Spiral (2017)

Engraved in the Wind is a colorful suite celebrating a personal journey on solo flute inspired by visions of solitude in nature. The Ojai performance will feature selections from the 16-movement work.

An unfolding can be witnessed in the sunrise, an avalanche, rainfall, the growth of a child, and even a house party or a protest. It is a process where something, perhaps unclear, begins in subdued movement and then gradually increases in energy and amalgamation to become fully itself, perhaps in awe to its witness. *They Witnessed an Unfolding* is a platform for exploring organic pattern development and ritual inspired by this natural process from formlessness to clarity.

There are a few possible ways that celestial bodies can orbit the Earth. One is called the "spiral impact" orbit, in which it is inevitable for one celestial body to be pulled towards the greater object in an "inescapable spiral" until they ultimately collide.

—NICOLE M. MITCHELL

Inescapable Spiral (2017) was commissioned through International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)'s First Page program by Oscar Gerardo.



Saturday, June 10, 2017 | 11:00-11:30am

Libbey Park Gazebo

ICE Pop-Up Concert

MARIO DIAZ DE LEON

Labrys for bassoon and electronics (World Premiere)

Mysterium for woodwind trio and electronics

(World Premiere)

Claire Chase flute

Joshua Rubin clarinet

Rebekah Heller bassoon

Levy Lorenzo electronics

Special thanks
for underwriting support:

Connie Steensma and Rick Prins

Labrys, commissioned through
ICE's First Page, and today's
performance of *Mysterium*

FREE Event

Open to the public

Mario Diaz de Leon (b. 1979)

Labrys (2017)

Mysterium (2016)

A labrys is a double headed battle axe, which was widely used as a symbol of female divinity in ancient Greek and Minoan cultures. An exploration of primal, volatile, and luminous energies with bassoon and electronics. *Labrys* was commissioned by Connie Steensma and Rick Prins through ICE's First Page program.

A delicate meditation on subtle and mysterious power. A spell to lull the punishing elements, slowing down, while acknowledging and playing with darker energies and volatility. A series of rooms in an ancient temple, breathing colors into darkness and communing with the alien beauty of plant consciousness. *Mysterium* was commissioned through ICE's First Page program and dedicated to Jonathan Harris.

—MARIO DIAZ DE LEON

MARIO DIAZ DE LEON

composer

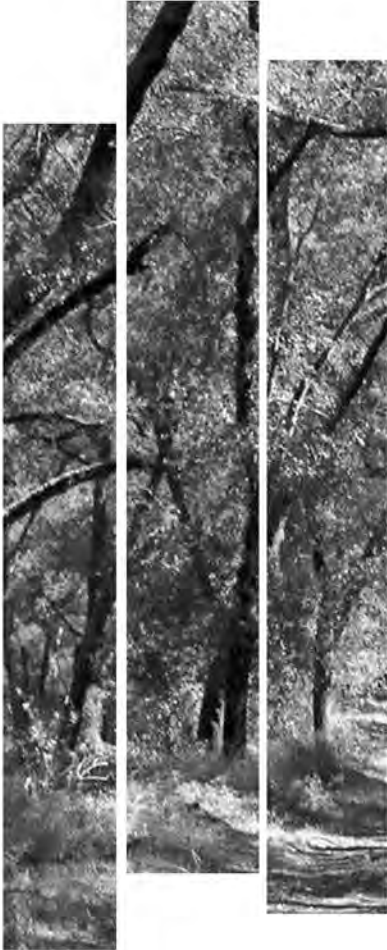
Mario Diaz de Leon is a composer and performer, whose output encompasses modern classical music, experimental electronic music, and extreme metal.

His works have been described as "21st century chamber music that couples crystalline clarity with the disorienting turbulence of a sonic vortex" (*Wire Magazine*). His debut album as composer, *Enter Houses Of* was released in 2009 on John Zorn's Tzadik label, and praised by *The New York Times* for its "hallucinatory intensity". A second album, entitled *The Soul is the Arena*, was released in 2015 on the Denovali label and named a notable recording of 2015 by the *New Yorker* magazine.

Recent performances have been at Walt Disney Concert Hall, Chicago Symphony Center, Hakuju Hall (Tokyo), Venice Biennale, Lucerne Festival (Switzerland), Musica Nova Helsinki, National Gallery of Art (DC), and Roulette (Brooklyn). Recent commissions include from the Los Angeles Philharmonic, ICE, Talea, and Chamber Music America.

From 2012-2016, his solo electronic project *Oneirogen* (o-NI-ro-jen) toured internationally and released three full length LPs and two EPs on the Denovali label. He currently leads the industrial black metal band Luminous Vault (Profound Lore Records) as vocalist and guitarist.

Born in Minnesota in 1979, he grew up playing guitar in hardcore punk bands before attending the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where he studied electronic music and composition. He has lived in New York City since 2004, and received his doctorate in music composition from Columbia University in 2013 where he was appointed Core Lecturer in Music Humanities.



Saturday, June 10, 2017 | 11:30am-12:15pm
Ojai Art Center

BRAVO Demonstration Concert

Ojai elementary students will offer a lively demonstration of *Education Through Music* (ETM), one of the Festival's BRAVO education workshops, that incorporates interactive song, play, and movement.

Audience participation is both welcomed and encouraged!

Laura Walter, BRAVO education coordinator

The Ojai Music Festival's BRAVO education and community programs are committed to fostering the next generation of musicians and artists through its free workshops and community performances. Learn more on page 126.

Special thanks
for underwriting support:

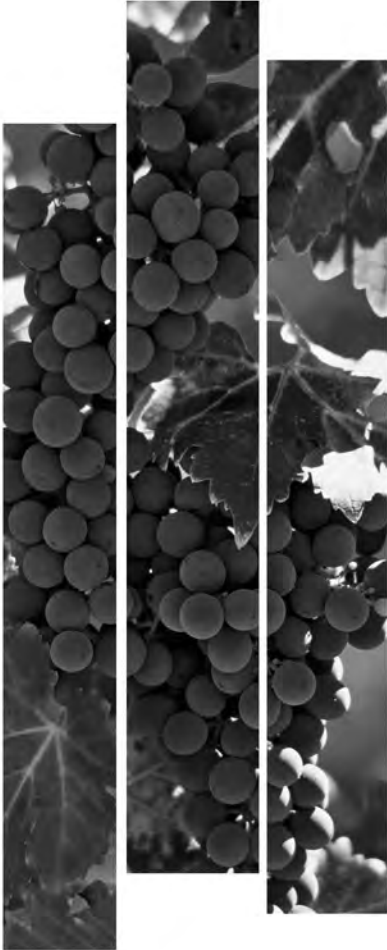
Ojai Festivals Women's Committee

US Bank

FREE Event

Open to the public

OJAI ART CENTER
113 S. MONTGOMERY STREET, OJAI



Saturday, June 10, 2017 | 1:00-3:30pm

Libbey Bowl

PART I

1:00-2:00pm

VIJAY IYER

Mozart Effects

GYÖRGY KURTÁG

Moments Musicaux, op. 44

Invocatio (un fragment)

Footfalls (... mintha valaki jönne ...)

Capriccio

In memoriam György Sebők

Rappel des oiseux (étude pour les harmoniques)

Les adieux (in Janáček's manner)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS

Quartet in Eb Major, K. 428

MOZART

Allegro, ma non troppo

Andante con moto

Menuetto (Allegretto)

Allegro vivace

Brentano Quartet

INTERMISSION

PART II

2:30-3:30pm

TYSHAWN SOREY

***Conduction*[®]**

Autoschediasms for

Creative Chamber Orchestra

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Tyshawn Sorey leader

Special thanks
for underwriting support:

Nancy and Barry Sanders

Join us for Concert Insights:
Host Christopher Hailey
with Douglas Ewart, Douglas Repetto,
and George Lewis,
noon, at the Libbey Park
tennis courts

After the concert, chat with artists and
guests at the outdoor Green Room
in Libbey Park

Vijay Iyer (b. 1971)
György Kurtág (b. 1926)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)

Tyshawn Sorey (b. 1980)

Mozart Effects (2011)
Moments Musicaux, op. 44 (1999–2005)
Allegro in E minor (fragment), K. 417d (1784)
Quartet in Eb Major, K. 428 (1783)
Autoschediasms for Creative Chamber Orchestra (2017)

Composition is selective improvisation.
—Igor Stravinsky

I don't care much about music.
What I like is sounds.

—Dizzy Gillespie

Gestures

Mozart Effects, part of the Brentano Quartet's commissioning project *Fragments: Connecting Past and Present*, placed Vijay Iyer in an unenviable position: "For a composer, to be tasked with 'finishing' an unfinished piece by Mozart is to serve as the punchline to a joke. [...] Perhaps we are all Salieri, still haunted by those infernal cackles—Wolfgang's revenge, yet again." It would appear, though, that Iyer had the last laugh. The E-minor Allegro, K. 417d, begins with a plaintive rising third, a motive that returns after 54 bars, now heading toward G major, when—*cadentialis interruptus*—the piece breaks off. This fizzled development serves Vijay Iyer as sufficient impetus to create his own work, "poised and earnest, but unraveling," slyly subverting both Mozart and the beneficial "effect" his music was once thought to have on cognition.

There is no telling what Mozart might have done with his original idea, that melancholic gesture, which opens the fragment, but this kind of motivic cell became a building block for composers

of the classical style, above all Haydn, from whom Mozart learned so much. His quartet in Eb major, one of six dedicated to Haydn in 1785, opens with a still more striking idea: a unison octave leap, an arresting tritone plunge, followed by chromatic slithering that foreshadows the delicious harmonic instability that sets the tone for the entire movement. The same chromatic ambiguity characterizes the Andante, whose hushed opening bars pair a yearning upward leap with a gentle step-wise descent, a gesture of heartbreaking poignancy that returns in numerous guises throughout the movement. The clownish belly flop that launches the Minuet—a tip of the hat to Haydn's irreverent humor—inverts the graceful octave leap that began the first movement, and the skittish fits and starts of the finale are presaged by a two-note figure that, like a cartoon character screeching to the precipice, stops just short of tumbling over the edge.

Misha Armory of the Brentano Quartet (who together with Mark Steinberg writes some of the most illuminating

program notes around) has proposed an enchanting metaphor for the process by which Mozart leads us from the "contemplation of lovely objects" to the realization "that the form itself, an airy mansion that contained these things, had risen up around us, called into being by its contents." But sometimes musical content—including those indelible gestures—has no architectural ambition and is simply happy to find a cozy corner of its own. This was the aspiration of the Romantic character piece, of which Kurtág's *Moments musicaux* are descendants.

As Mozart paid his debts to Haydn, Kurtág acknowledges his to Anton Webern, the miniaturist, described by Schoenberg as the master of the "novel in a sigh." But Schoenberg got it wrong. It is not the novel in all its rich complexity that is contained within the miniature, but the moment, pregnant with its possibilities. There is a difference, and therein lies the genius of the gesture that encapsulates with no need for elaboration. The whip and slash—upward leap, downward

CONTINUED ►►

GESTURES

plunge—that open the “Invocatio” (how different from the supple variant of the same gesture that opens Mozart’s quartet!) tell us all we need to know about this brittle, jagged fragment. Heavy, deliberate steps introduce “Footfalls.” The title alludes to a play by Samuel Beckett, but the movement is also accompanied by a poem, “No One Comes,” by Endre Ady, whose concluding stanza reads: “Kipp-kopp, now a funeral twilight/A misty, hollow melody sounds/The autumn evening. Today no one comes to me/Today no one will come to me, no one.” The spasmodic bursts of sparks that usher in the “Capriccio” introduce the kind of slapstick humor Haydn might have enjoyed, a reminder that several of Kurtág’s miniatures are reworked from his ongoing series *Játékok* (Games). The lament for the pianist György Sebök is introduced by five leaden chords that culminate in an agonizing jolt; everything that follows rises like vapor from this knot of pain. In “Rappel des oiseux” vapor has drifted into a sphere of jittery avian chatter that is wholly oblivious to human anguish. That anguish returns in “Les Adieux,” in which Kurtág evokes the musical spirit of Leoš Janáček with gestures, unusual for Kurtág, that hint at an epic scale only to fade away into inconclusive silence.

*

Tyshawn Sorey first met Butch Morris (1947–2013) in 2002 when Morris asked him to participate in a creative orchestra performance at the Bowery Poetry Club in New York. It was an experience, Sorey recalls, “that would forever change my life as a composer and performer”:

That Butch was able to create a trans-idiomatic music, simultaneously embracing and altering a wide range of musical traditions, led me to the understanding that music is a direct language that can be communicated and developed with anyone, from anywhere, at any time.

Morris began with the premise that all music is “sonic information,” sometimes composed, sometimes improvised. His own roots were in free jazz, but what he had in mind was nothing less than a universal art of “collective imagination,” the ability to shape sound in real time with any ensemble, large or small; with acoustic or electronic instruments; musicians from oral, written, or improvised backgrounds; with no stylistic, geographic, or cultural boundaries.

The result was Conduction® (a conflation of “conducted improvisation”), a term Morris coined and trademarked in 1985. His idea: A leader establishes basic parameters for individual improvisation,

then manipulates the results using a vocabulary of gestures, some borrowed from standard conducting technique for, say, tempo and dynamics, others devised to guide improvisation: to sustain, repeat, imitate, or develop an idea or commit a passage to memory for later recall. The process is interactive because even as the conductor’s gestures form the piece, those gestures are in turn interpreted by the performers. “I only control the structure—they control the content.” Certainly, the quality of the content depends on the skill and creative imagination of the players, who first need to learn to read the conductor’s “signs and gestures” and then to respond to each other in what is an intensely collaborative activity. “I mine music, mine sonic information,” Morris once said, “and then we refine it.” Morris himself found that he was often “startled” by what he heard, likening the experience to throwing down a piece of clay and then molding it into a work of art. The goal, however, was “to advance the collective knowledge that we gain.” Tyshawn Sorey continues Morris’s work and is today the leading exponent of Conduction®. No telling what we’ll hear today, but *listen* as the players discover their gestures; and watch as Tyshawn Sorey, with gestures of his own, shapes them in air.

—CHRISTOPHER HAILEY

Saturday, June 10, 2017 | 8:00-9:45pm

Libbey Bowl

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Le Sacré du Printemps (arranged by Cliff Colnot)

Part I: Adoration of the Earth

Introduction

The Augurs of Spring

Ritual of Abduction

Spring Rounds

Games of the Two Rival Tribes

Procession of the Sage: The Sage

Dance of the Earth

Part II: The Sacrifice

Introduction

Mystic Circle of the Young Girls

Glorification of the Chosen One

Evocation of the Ancestors

Ritual Action of the Ancestors

Sacrificial Dance

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Steven Schick conductor

INTERMISSION

VIJAY IYER

RADHE RADHE: Rites of Holi

Film directed, edited, and designed by Prashant Bhargava

Part I: Adoration

Dawn

Promise

Summoning

Spring Fever

Procession

Colors

Part II: Transcendence

Thirst

Intoxication

Exaltation

Spirits

Rituals

Purging Rites

Vijay Iyer piano

Tyshawn Sorey drums

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Steven Schick conductor

Sven Furberg projections

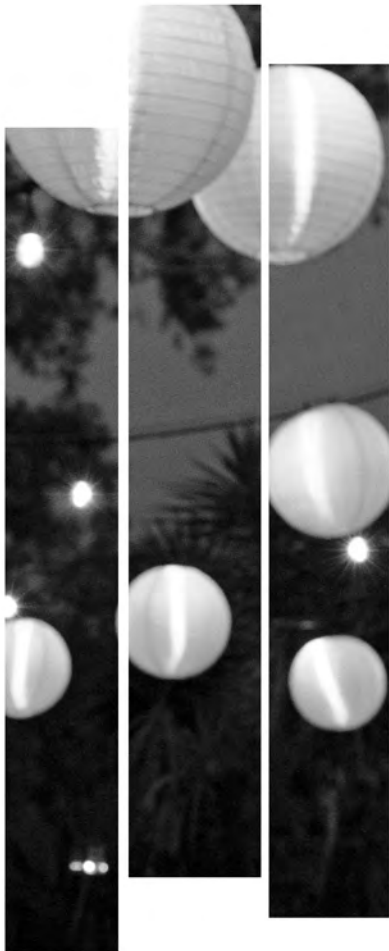
Special thanks
for underwriting support:

Smith-Hobson Foundation

This concert is dedicated to
**Ed Landry and
the Walter Lantz Foundation**

Join us for Concert Insights:
Host Christopher Hailey
with Courtney Bryan,
7:00pm, at the Libbey Park
tennis courts

After the concert, chat with artists and
guests at the outdoor Green Room
in Libbey Park



Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) / Cliff Colnot
Prashant Bhargava (1973–2015) / Vijay Iyer (b. 1971)

Le Sacré du Printemps (1913; 2016)
RADHE RADHE: Rites of Holi (2014)

*The one true comment about a piece of music
is another piece of music.*

—Igor Stravinsky

Objects of Desire

Stravinsky got it right: Only music can comment on music, as this festival has demonstrated. But tonight's works are something different. If Varèse, Bach, and Mozart sent composers hurtling off in new directions (and one might say the same of improvisation, which is at every moment taking off from the moment before), the two halves of this concert are more akin to a lingering embrace. Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* has been prominent in recent Ojai festivals, appearing in 2005 and 2012 in versions for one and two pianos (Bugallo-Williams; Andsnes/Hamelin), and in 2013, the *Rite's* centennial year, in an arrangement for piano, bass, and drums (The Bad Plus), a gradual expansion of performing forces that indicates we may hear the composer's full orchestra original sometime late in the next century. These stripped-down versions captured the *Rite's* rhythms and harmonies with fierce energy and skeletal clarity, but this year, in an arrangement for an ensemble of 12 (suggesting a certain acceleration of our timetable) we'll get something more: color.

It is striking how memories of the *Rite* are linked to its colors—the pinched bassoon solo of the opening bars, undulating strings, pungent clarinets, snarling trumpets, shrieking flutes and piccolos, thumping bass and percussion—an orchestra of sharply etched primary colors, intense, explosive. This was how Stravinsky remembered the eruption of Spring, announced by the cracking ice of the Neva River in St. Petersburg: bursts of color out of the monochrome of winter; a sudden, violent awakening at once exhilarating and menacing.

Stravinsky's ballet conjures this experience of Spring through an ancient, primitive rite, strange and alien. But like any rite it draws us into its sway, as if the very idea of annual recurrence overwhelms and submerges individual identity into shared, communal experience. We've transformed the horror of its culminating sacrifice into a cathartic abstraction, a symbol of frenzied abandon, a yielding that is coupled with the very experience of this piece. Our love of *The Rite of Spring*, its grip upon our imagination more than

a century after its premiere, has less to do with honoring a hypnotic icon that glares down from the darkened walls of music history than with surrendering to its immersive, enravishing power. Perhaps this explains why this one work has inspired so many versions and arrangements, from Walt Disney to The Bad Plus to Cliff Colnot. It is as if we can't get enough. Reliving the experience of this work from every possible angle—a recurring ritual of its own—is to recapture afresh that initial seduction. Memory and recall fuel the embers of desire.

When Prashant Bhargava first contemplated commemorating *The Rite of Spring* through a film about the Hindu Rites of Holi, he was skeptical: "*The Rite of Spring* is a dark, dissonant work, and Holi is a joyous festival. Where could the two meet?" Holi, the heady spring festival that marks the carnal union of the goddess Radha with Lord Krishna, is a festival of color—clouds of color that fill the air and cover everything and everyone. Here, too, is spring as explosion, as passion unleashed by forces of nature that subsume individuals in communal

CONTINUED ►►

OBJECTS OF DESIRE

celebration. But whereas Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* traces an arc from violence to sacrifice, Bhargava's *RADHE RADHE* passes through chaos to transcendence.

For all its violence, *The Rite of Spring* was born in the quiet seclusion of Clarens, Switzerland, the alpine town where Stravinsky had rented a home and a studio to compose his ballet. Bhargava, on the other hand, took his cameras to the Braj region of Uttar Pradesh in northern India, the mythological home of Krishna and Radha. Here, he recalled, "they celebrated for eight days and it was primal and violent and sexual and celebration and they lost all their inhibition; it was a true kind of emerging of springtime in such a beautiful way." Rather than attempting a sober documentary narrative, Bhargava immersed himself in the frenetic, uninhibited crowds: "Shooting was chaotic and cathartic: Every evening for eight days, our crew returned drenched in color,

beaten and exhausted, only to be swept back up in more feverish celebrations the next morning." He assembled his footage along the emotional arc of Stravinsky's ballet—a structure of 12 episodes in two halves—shaping each section according to Stravinsky's music, quite literally "sculpting the edit" around the episodes of the original scenario, such as the procession of the wise elders, the spring rounds, and the sacrificial dance. In the process, Bhargava's use of montage mirrors the disjointed block-like structure of Stravinsky's score.

In composing his own score, Vijay Iyer found it necessary to mute Bhargava's Stravinskian "temp track" and let himself be "guided by the film's inherent pulses—the rhythms of a people in transformation." This included taking cues from the music and sounds recorded in the original footage: "There is music everywhere—different bands of roving troupes of

drummers and singers worshipping and singing devotional songs." The structural template, then, remained Stravinsky, but aside from a prominent bassoon solo there are no obvious allusions to Stravinsky's music. Instead, Iyer's goal was to take viewers through the "series of energies" captured in the film.

Our lingering embrace of a work like Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, whether through faithful arrangement, free adaptation, or creative variation, pays tribute to its power as a cultural artifact. It also says something about our capacity for transforming such objects of desire into vehicles of discovery. If Cliff Colnot has translated Stravinsky's score into the textures of a contemporary ensemble, if Prashant Bhargava and Vijay Iyer have established a cross-cultural dialogue with the ballet's scenario, these are means by which culture reflects upon itself, the "true comments," the ones that matter.

—CHRISTOPHER HAILEY

Saturday, June 10, 2017 | 10:30-11:30pm

Libbey Bowl

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH *Art of the Fugue* excerpts

Contrapunctus I

Contrapunctus VII, a 4 per Augmentationem et Diminutionem

Contrapunctus IV

Contrapunctus XI, a 4

Brentano Quartet

VIJAY IYER

Time, Place, Action

in memory of Imamu Amiri Baraka

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Brentano Quartet

Vijay Iyer piano

Yet Unheard (World Premiere of chamber version)

COURTNEY BRYAN

with Helga Davis

and text by Sharan Strange

Helga Davis solo soprano

Joelle Lamarre soprano

Gwendolyn Brown contralto

Julian Terrell Otis tenor

Davóne Tines baritone

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble

Steven Schick conductor

Special thanks
for underwriting support:

Aaron Copland Fund for Music

Amphion Foundation

FREE Ticketed Event

Please visit the Box Office

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
Vijay Iyer (b. 1971)
Courtney Bryan (b. 1982)

Art of the Fugue (1750)
Time, Place, Action (2014)
Yet Unheard (2016/2017)

*The torture of being the unseen object, and
the constantly observed subject.*

—Amiri Baraka

talk about it, talk about it, talk about it

—Charles Mingus

Subject Matters

Mingus' shout-out to tenor saxophonist Booker Ervin ("Prayer for Passive Resistance," *Mingus at Antibes*) boils down to this: Keep it going. Ervin's extended improvisation does just that because he has something to say. There are subjects that need talking about, subjects you can't exhaust in a single solo, let alone a headline or a tweet. The kind of subjects you chew on, consider from every angle, and can't let go. Three composers have found such a subject and what you'll hear is why those subjects matter.

Johann Sebastian Bach was devoted to his craft, a devotion that sprang from a deeply held conviction that music was a part of the divine order. His works are suffused with theological allusions from graphic word painting to abstract symbolism, but in Bach's mind composition itself was a sacred pursuit. The elaborate counterpoint that permeates his vocal and instrumental works and is distilled in the fugues of the Well-Tempered Clavier and the *Musical Offering* are a case in point. Bach developed ideas through iteration,

variation, and combination in order to work out their full potential, to find in each that spark of divine inspiration. His last great work, *Art of the Fugue*, on which he labored during his final decade and left incomplete at his death, is a collection of 14 fugues and four canons on a single, four-bar subject. The theme is introduced in the first Contrapunctus (i.e. fugue), followed by treatments in augmentation and diminution (VII), inversion with counter-subjects (IV), and a triple fugue on fragments of the theme heard in inversion (XI).

In *Time, Place, Action*, Vijay Iyer's subject is our shared experience of time. As in *Emergence*, heard in the opening concert, he explores the contrast between improvisational and more fully notated music, or, as he puts it, "the spirit of real-time invention in dialogue with the meticulous interpretive art of the string quartet." In this quintet for piano and string quartet, the piano part is skeletal, allowing Iyer to make choices in the moment, whereas the quartet, whose part is largely written out, contributes to this dialogue

through its expressive freedom. "What the two approaches have in common," Iyer continues, "is a focus on the experience of sound in time; the priority in both cases is not only the articulation of form, but also a heightened attention to moment-to-moment interaction and the flow of aural sensation. That zone (between score and experience, let's say) is where this piece is meant to dwell."

Owing to his own double life as a trained classical violinist and a largely self-taught pianist, Iyer is sensitive to the differences between these two spheres of experience, not only between notated and improvised music, but between "two sensibilities about time," between "two malleable, expressive rubato of classical music and the groove-oriented rhythm of jazz, in which performers play ahead, behind, or on top of a steady pulse. In *Time, Place, Action* he seeks to bridge such differences in a work he describes as "a mix-tape: a series of juxtaposed episodes through which a larger story emerges."

CONTINUED ►►

SUBJECT MATTERS

Time, Place, Action is dedicated to the memory of the poet and activist Imamu Amiri Baraka, who once wrote: "The artist's role is to raise the consciousness of the people. To make them understand life, the world and themselves more completely." These are words Courtney Bryan has taken to heart in her own music, in her passionate commitment to using art to engage with issues of social justice:

I'm a Black woman in the classical world. A lot of times it would seem the thing to do is not to bring attention to that. Maybe try to blend in, not do a piece about a Black woman who was victimized by a policeman or a concert about women of Black Lives Matter. But I don't think hiding ever helps.

The piece in question, *Yet Unheard*, was composed in collaboration with the poet Sharan Strange and the soprano Helga Davis for the activist orchestra The Dream Unfinished, and was premiered at a benefit entitled "Sing Her Name," for the women

of the Black Lives Matter movement. The subject is Sandra Bland, who died in police custody in a Texas jail after what ought to have been a routine traffic stop. Strange's poems, with interspersed texts by Patrisse Cullors and Angela Davis and vocal quartet commentary, imagine Bland's thoughts during her last days, unseen under observation.

Bryan, like Vijay Iyer, is both a trained classical musician and an accomplished jazz performer, but of equal significance is her long experience in sacred music in various denominational settings: "I find that the way I approach music is very related to my role as a church musician. In that setting you're trying to bring some sort of emotional catharsis during the service." She cautions, however, that *Yet Unheard* offers no straightforward, moral uplift: "The story of Sandra Bland is inconclusive. I didn't want the piece to end triumphantly, because it isn't triumphant." Because in this time, in this place, we need to talk about it. And act.

—CHRISTOPHER HAILEY

COURTNEY BRYAN

composer

Courtney Bryan is "a pianist and composer of panoramic interests" (*The New York Times*). Her music ranges from solo works to large ensembles in the new music and jazz idioms, film scores, and collaborations with dancers, visual artists, writers, and actors, and is in conversation with various musical genres, including jazz and other types of experimental music, as well as traditional gospel, spirituals, and hymns. Bryan holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory (BM), Rutgers University (MM), and Columbia University (DMA Composition). She has been an instructor at Columbia and the Oberlin Conservatory, and a postdoctoral research associate in the Department for African American Studies at Princeton University. Bryan is assistant professor of music at Tulane University. She has two recordings, *Quest for Freedom* (2007) and *This Little Light of Mine* (2010). Bryan's work has been presented in a wide range of venues, including Lincoln Center, Miller Theatre, Symphony Space, Roulette Intermedium, The Museum of Modern Art, National Gallery of Art,

and Blue Note Jazz Club. Recent premieres include *White Gleam of Our Bright Star* (Colorado Springs Philharmonic); *Soli Deo Gloria* (Duo Noire); *Yet Unheard* for chorus, orchestra, and Helga Davis; a collaboration with Sharan Strange (The Dream Unfinished, an Activist Orchestra); and *His Love Endures* (New York Jazzharmonic).

Upcoming commissions include *Do Your Thing* (Carnegie Hall's Link Up "Orchestra Swings" program), *The Bremen Town Band* (Miller Theatre), and *Blooming* (Imani Winds and UChicago Presents).

Bryan was recently featured as a speaker at the Tulane University Newcomb College Institute, the National Jazz Museum of Harlem, and The Institute of Women & Ethnic Studies of New Orleans. She has curated performances and discussions on women in jazz at Princeton University and Drexel University, and on music and spirituality at Bethany Baptist Church of Newark and Columbia University.

TEXT

COURTNEY BRYAN: YET UNHEARD (2016/2017) with Helga Davis

Text by Sharan Strange

I. Prelude

Mother, call out to your daughter
Lift her up now, sisters, brothers
Break through fear, push back hatred's stone

*It's an honor to protest for her
We will not forget her name*

People, lift her up to chant her story
Lift her, hear her speak again....

II.

What did he see
that prompted such rage?
What did he feel—
with my face reflected
in his eyes, my voice in his mind...

What frustration did he unleash,
what empathy dismiss,
when a woman did not cower,
but chastised his arrogance, his cowardice?

Did the rush of traffic stir
some dormant emotion—
an urge to anxiety, self-pity...?
He was undone so quickly!
And my power—robust, unbidden,
was it too much on display?
Did that drive his anger
to kill me that day?

III.

Didn't he kill me that day—
not just in that moment, but
with torturous delay?
I sat three days in a cell,
a cocoon of despair,
my head bursting,
my questions unanswered,
my challenge criminally rebuked,
my anger no match for them
as they robbed me of heirs...

And tried to kill my dignity, too.
But you are my heirs, my witnesses,
beyond all glaring disregard,
all contempt for truth...
Hold me precious, kin.
Don't relinquish our lives
to erasure by brutes.

*We've forgotten
how to imagine black life...
Our imagination has only allowed
for us to understand
black people
as a dying people.*

IV.

My life was my own,
my body my own,
a Black woman's joys and pain—
much the same as ancestors'
physical losses, spiritual gains—
But my death! I cannot reconcile,
under their cover of brutality,
neglect, official lies....

The police made a yoke
I could not slip. I tell you,
I willed myself to live! as
my life was clipped.
And what was the crime?
I dared to resist
society's murderous design.

*How do we imagine
something different,
that...centers black
people, that sees
them in the future...?*

V.

I'm done with this life,
gone and done. My footprints,
my shadow, my laughter, my
quick, strong speech...gone.
What mercy I have known...done.
And stifling injustice
sits in its place.

But I know truth spreads.
No stone of ignorance
can stand against it forever.
No fire of hate
can outlast its reach.
Silence will be shattered
by its piercing notes.
Strength will rise along its path.

VI. Coda

*Now is the time to dream
about impossible futures,
the conditions
for possibility
for the impossible...*

My people, won't you sing her name?
Unabashed woman, defiant black life,
skin-to-marrow Blackness...house
of wounds, need, deep love, and faith.

Yes! We sing her name, clear
and open in this place...
We'll transmute her death to justice,
make freedom flourish in her wake.

Note:

*Italicized lines comprise quotes/paraphrases
by Patrisse Cullors and Angela Davis.*



Sunday, June 11, 2017 | 10:00-11:15am

Libbey Bowl

Free Community Concert

THE TRIO

Mahal Richard Abrams piano

Roscoe Mitchell winds

George Lewis trombone and electronics

Program to be announced from the stage

Special thanks
for underwriting support:

Carolyn and Jamie Bennett

Union Bank

FREE Ticketed Event

Please visit the Box Office

After the concert, chat with artists and
guests at the outdoor Green Room
in Libbey Park

Muhai Richard Abrams (b. 1930)

Roscoe Mitchell (b. 1940)

George Lewis (b. 1952)

The Trio

A colloquy among the members of The Trio was published in 2006 under the byline of critic Howard Mandel, who had covered the AACM since the early 1970s. Mandel's keen ethnographer's ear allowed me to use his quotes to create a polylogue similar to the "Afterword" chapter of my 2008 book, *A Power Stronger than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music*.

*

I was having a hard time creating a narrative for The Trio's performance at Ojai. I started with something like this: "We had worked together many times since Muhai, a co-founder of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, and Roscoe, an original AACM member who was present at the first meetings in 1965, brought me into the collective in 1971. However, we had never worked just as a trio, so after our performance at the 2003 Venice Biennale, which we liked a lot, we decided to continue on as simply 'The Trio.'"

"The Trio continues to explore open improvisation," I went on, but a little voice inside me broke out: "But the AACM was not solely focused on free improvisation. At one end of our spectrum are completely notated works, with totally improvised pieces at the other. For this project, we decided to continue with open improvisation—as practice, not as genre."

I was getting stuck, so I decided to show the unfinished narrative to Roscoe and Muhai. Roscoe pointed out that "We bring to these improvisations the experience we have of playing all these years together, the development of each person's language, and our being able to adapt those languages so they work well together."

"Sounds great," I replied. "So how about, 'Our work reflects a 45-year collaborative relationship in which we continually strive to exceed ourselves.'"

"That's right," Roscoe responded. "You get to one place and then see you have another place to get to. You never get to the destinations. I don't think you're going to master music in one lifetime."

Expanding the context of the discussion, Muhai observed that "Sound itself precedes what we think of as music. Sound itself is raw material. You decide to use something that impresses you in the raw world of sound—and it becomes what we call music."

"I've always liked experimenting with different sounds," Roscoe continued. "I put them together in different ways through the practice of regimens, so I become familiar with certain sound areas, then expand on those areas."

"Some people might call it noise," Muhai laughed, "but it's organized sound, coming from a particular point of view that we want to express."

"This feels like the best period of the music," Roscoe declared excitedly, "because we've actually had some time to develop some things and work them through. This is one of the things I enjoy the most: the development and research aspect. I look at each day as an opportunity to learn more."

CONTINUED ►►

THE TRIO

"Sometimes," I responded, "people say, 'Oh, it sounds like a film.' Maybe that expresses the difficulty that people have in talking about sound. Because the sounds are carriers for other types of information. As an improviser, I decode that information—goals, plans, and aspirations about where the players want the music to go—the same way any of us might read the mood in someone's voice."

"The audience can read these signs too," I said, "and when they do, our encounter with improvised music moves beyond style and aesthetic judgment toward a direct encounter with a fundamentally human condition."

"Styles are created within music, but music is too vast to take in in one sip of the information," responded Muhal. "When one realizes there's a duty to respect music itself, smashing these genres and putting different things together becomes a thing you do, and you extract what you personally feel fits your particular point of view ..."

Piqued to the point of excited interruption, I broke in. "We have to make sure that we are paying attention in as many ways as possible."

"Yes," Muhal replied, "but what a sincere and honest observer sees is just as accurate as someone who sees it the exact opposite way."

"It has always been and always will be important to me," Muhal declared, "to observe individuals expressing their individualism. That's the beauty of it."

We nodded in agreement.

—GEORGE LEWIS

OJAI

Live Music | Great Food | Beer & Wine Garden

Art & Crafts Vendors | Celebrate Ojai!

DAY

FREE
Community
Celebration!

October 21
10 am—5 pm

*Located in the heart
of downtown Ojai*



Sunday, June 11, 2017 | 1:00-3:00pm
Libbey Bowl

CONFLUENCE

Zakir Hussain tabla

Vijay Iyer piano

Rudresh Mahanthappa saxophone

Aruna Sairam vocalist

**Program will be announced from the stage
and concert will include one intermission**

Special thanks
for underwriting support:

Barbara Smith Fund for World Musics

Ruth Eliel and William Cooney
Aruna Sairam's performance

Join us for Concert Insights:
Host Christopher Hailey
with Thomas W. Morris,
noon, at the Libbey Park
tennis courts

After the concert, chat with artists and
guests at the outdoor Green Room
in Libbey Park

Zakir Hussain (b. 1951)
Aruna Sairam (b. 1952)
Vijay Iyer (b. 1971)
Rudresh Mahanthappa (b. 1971)

*Use it if you can, but use it with respect,
with the reverence that it deserves.*

—Batá master Milton Corona
(to Zakir Hussain)

At the Intersection of Time

Vijay Iyer and Rudresh Mahanthappa met in 1995. “We both immediately knew,” Iyer recalled, “that this would be an important connection”:

We were two South Asian Americans of the same age (born in 1971), trying to gain a foothold in the world of creative improvised music, and trying to address issues of identity, community, and history through our work, while negotiating the pitfalls of pigeonholing and self-exoticization. Our many collaborations—as the duo Raw Materials, in the Manodharma Trio with South Indian percussionist Trichy Sankaran, in each other’s quartets, and in other ensemble formats—have provided a crucial space for our ongoing creative inquiry, as improvisors sitting at a particular intersection of composite realities.

Children of immigrants—members of any diasporic community—are constantly negotiating multiple identities, and nowhere is that negotiation more fluid than in music. But today virtually all

creative musicians find themselves at this intersection of composite realities. In 1971, the year Vijay Iyer and Rudresh Mahanthappa were born, Zakir Hussain, son and student of the legendary tabla master Ustad Alla Rakha, had been in the United States two years. At 20, he had already embarked on an international career that included touring with Ravi Shankar, then riding the crest of Western interest in North Indian classical music with its centuries-old of repertory of metrical and melodic patterns (talas and ragas). In a recent discussion with Vijay Iyer, Hussain recalled his humbling encounter with other musical cultures:

I arrived thinking that ‘I am representing a 2,000-year-old history, a very refined tradition that I am bringing, and so we should be teaching people what to do.’ I had no clue that there were other traditions in the world that were just as old if not older and just as refined and deep and had so much to offer. I started to see so many things I needed to learn in order to make my playing better and expand my repertoire. [...]

What I saw among Afro-Cuban, Latin percussion instruments: The tonalities were being discovered, the singing was part of the musicality of the instrument, and you heard not only the rhythms being played, but melodies coming out of the instrument and each area of the instrument was being discovered, being found, being caressed to express itself. And suddenly it was like a revelation.

Such revelations have likewise shaped the music of Aruna Sairam. Like Zakir Hussain, she is a classically trained artist, although her roots are in South Indian Carnatic music which, though likewise built on talas and ragas, is primarily vocal with a rich vocabulary of embellishments. Sairam has also been drawn to explore what she calls the alchemy of cross-cultural exchange, including a dialogue with North Indian music, with its Persian and Islamic genealogies, as well as collaborations with artists across a range of styles and repertoires from Gregorian chant to Moroccan Sufi and Arab-Andalusian traditions.

CONTINUED ►►

The Ojai Valley's community newspaper since 1891

OJAI VALLEY NEWS

www.ojaivalleynews.com



*"Music expresses that which
cannot be put into words
and that which cannot
remain silent."*

— Victor Hugo

Thank you Ojai Music Festival
for providing to the people
of the Ojai Valley
that which we cannot.

From the "word" people at
The Ojai Valley News

The Ojai Valley News
Bringing the written word
to the Ojai Valley since 1891

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

AT THE INTERSECTION OF TIME

Solid technical mastery rooted in years of study have enabled Sairam and Hussain to use their instrumental and vocal virtuosity to engage as well with contemporary musical practices, including the jazz-inflected improvisational styles of which Iyer and Mahanthappa are a part. Indeed, at Iyer's invitation, both Hussain and Sairam have served as faculty members at the International Jazz Convention at the Banff Centre in Canada. Today's concert marks their first appearance together as a quartet.

Vijay Iyer uses music to create communities, especially communities forged out of difference. He and Mahanthappa have studied Indian music, whose elements are present in their own works, but the differences here are nonetheless stark. They are cultural and generational; a contrast of classical and contemporary; of ancient traditions of voice and percussion against two upstarts, piano and saxophone; of intricate metrical and melodic vocabularies against styles infused by a Western harmonic language with very dissimilar rhythmic and tonal premises. Bridging these differences involves more than creative

interaction; it is also a re-conception of time.

All music resonates with the cultural, social, religious, and philosophical practices that gave it birth. For conversant musicians and audiences such layers of meaning infuse each musical moment; for those outside the culture they are usually lost in translation. In this meeting between revered traditions of Indian music and an improvisational language with roots in jazz, the European avant-garde, and American experimentalism, this kind of temporal experience is transformed. The moment, laden thick with history, is funneled into something slender and fragile, an ephemeral intersection of sounds, that may draw on but does not require cultural context for understanding. It is instead something new, a shared composite reality—and one that may, in time, give birth to histories of its own.

—CHRISTOPHER HAILEY

Sunday, June 11, 2017 | 5:30-7:30pm

Libbey Bowl



VIJAY IYER

FAR FROM OVER

Far from Over

Chorale

Poles

For Lucia McBath

Down to the Wire

Nope

Taking Flight

Good on the Ground

Threnody

Program subject to change

VIJAY IYER SEXTET

Graham Haynes cornet/flugelhorn

Steve Lehman alto & soprano saxophone

Mark Shim tenor saxophone

Vijay Iyer piano, Fender Rhodes piano

Stephan Crump bass

Tyshawn Sorey drums

Special thanks
for underwriting support:

David Nygren
New Music USA

After the concert, chat with artists and
guests at the outdoor Green Room
in Libbey Park

Vijay Iyer (b. 1971)

FAR FROM OVER (all pieces 2008-2017)

Far from Over
Chorale
Poles
For Lucia McBath
Down to the Wire
Nope
Taking Flight
Good on the Ground
Threnody

We're sending you home this evening with music made for the outdoors, full of joy and danger, unity and defiance. Like much of what you've heard this weekend, this music challenges, but it also celebrates. We might call this resistance-as-music, as opposed to music-as-resistance. Music as resistance would seem to refer to music that wears its politics on its sleeve: compositions with political titles, or songs with agitprop lyrics. It treats resistance like an option, one that you are free to take up or not; it is the hashtag, the ornament, the Pepsi can. But resistance-as-music might connote something more structural, more existential, a fully corporeal mode of sustained antagonism; a hexis, a position, a way of being, an aesthetically precise way of embodying alterity.

By now, at Festival's end, you've witnessed a few spectra of variables, multiple sacral rites, several summonings of spirits, plentiful conjurings, diverse visions of assembly: a power many times stronger than itself. If a unified sensibility has emerged from this weekend, it is that all music is social, born of collective human action; that listening to musical performance is no less than a process of empathy; that given time and listening with care, anyone can make music together, even across what may seem like chasms of difference; and that essentially, this phenomenon that we call music begins not with sound, not with rhythm, but with our shared personhood. In other words, music begins with the *very category* of the human.

To put it this way makes music seem like a fantasy about the melting away of difference, and I'm aware of the perils of such a stance. International music festivals like this one can easily turn into mighty pageants, strident displays of tolerance and inclusiveness, concealing as much as they celebrate. Who are the "communities" served by an agenda of performed diversity—who, if not the community of privileged, liberal, overwhelmingly white and born-free consumers of some or another idea of music—those who buy into this or that particular musical art world, its superstructures, and its convenient narratives of greatness, transcendence, and togetherness?

As musicians of color who circulate in the west, particularly at festivals and performing arts centers, many of my colleagues and I are continually reminded of the non-neutrality of bodies. We see how the movements of Black bodies are continually photographed, aestheticized, sexualized, romanticized, ridiculed, made into spectacle; how images and sounds of Black bodies in motion are stockpiled, categorized, commodified, circulated; how white people enjoy the freedoms of assembly, expression, and the bearing of arms, while black and brown people are made to feel as though their very presence is a problem or a threat, their very humanity challenged or dismissed.

We won't dispel these problems today, but in this age marked by difference, power, and rampant oppression, perhaps there is a glimmer of something that musical performance offers us. Simply put, we are all involved in music because of what music does. Certainly, it soothes, but it does more than soothe; yes, it produces pleasure, but much more than that. I am especially interested in those experiences when shared presence with music can, however momentarily, offer a kind of *ritual eclipse*. It was Wadada Leo Smith who said that the function of live music is "to transform that [observer's] life in just an instant, so that when they go back to the routine part of living, they carry with them a little bit of something else."

This experiential residue, this embodied memory, this unnamed "something else" that you will now carry back with you, represents our very future in a time of fierce urgency and precarity; it refers to how we all choose to bring our newfound collective awareness forward into the world. If our gathering this weekend in Ojai has managed to set such a process in motion, then let us also agree that the necessary transformations are far from over.

Thank you, and please keep listening.

—VIJAY IYER