

Friday, September 14, 2018 at 7:30pm
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence

SŌ PERCUSSION

Eric Cha-Beach, Josh Quillen,
Adam Sliwinski, and Jason Treuting

with

Todd Meehan and Douglas Perkins

PROGRAM

ERIC CHA-BEACH (b. 1982) *Four and Nine* (2017)

JURI SEO (b. 1981) *vv* (2017)

JOAN TOWER (b. 1938) *Small Plus* (2018)

VIJAY IYER (b. 1971) *TORQUE* (2018)

— INTERMISSION —

JASON TREUTING (b. 1977) *Nine Numbers 6* (2017)

ANGÉLICA NEGRÓN (b. 1981) *gone* (2017)

PAULINE OLIVEROS (1932-2016) *Tuning Meditation* (2017)

IANNIS XENAKIS (1922-2001) “Peaux” from *Pleiades* (2017)

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the opening of Sō Percussion's fifth year as Edward T. Cone performers-in-Residence at Princeton University! We are delighted to present this eclectic program of percussion pieces from some of the most exciting composers of our time. We are especially proud to feature Princeton-based composers Juri Seo, Jason Treuting, and Eric Cha-Beach. Our other fantastic living composers (Joan Tower, Vijay Iyer, and Angélica Negrón) are at the forefront of contemporary music. The music of Pauline Oliveros and Iannis Xenakis, though they are not with us anymore, still feels fresh.

All the works on this program by living composers were written for Sō Percussion. Thank you as always to Princeton University and the Princeton Music Department for supporting our work!

PROGRAM NOTES

ERIC CHA-BEACH

Four and Nine (2017)

Four and Nine was written for the Sō Percussion Summer Institute 2017. The piece explores all the ways that a bar of 9/4 can be subdivided: there are 36 sixteenth notes in the bar (9 beats x 4 sixteenth notes per beat) - and 36 can be divided evenly by 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 12, and 18. The various combinations of different overlapping divisions in the bar make the underlying groupings of 16th notes constantly sound different. I used this basic idea in a piece for Sō Percussion's project *A Gun Show* in 2016, but *Four and Nine* explores the pure process of hearing each possible combination in turn.

-Eric Cha-Beach

JURI SEO

vv (2017)

My first inspiration for *vv* was the vibraphone itself, particularly its dark metallic sound with long resonance. I built harmonies that evolve over the course of their duration by selectively muting some of the notes. The players use their fingers and mallets to dampen the notes, feeling the decay intimately. The introduction gives rise to a playful theme. *vv* then unfolds in an unconventional sonata form in which the themes head toward dissolution rather than consolidation. What fascinated me, beyond the sounding music, was the way the players interact with each other in order to collectively execute intricate musical gestures. It is as if the mallets are the fingers of a single person.

-Juri Seo

JOAN TOWER

Small Plus (2018)

Small Plus was written for Sō Percussion, a group of four extraordinary percussionists who helped me with an expanded version of an earlier solo work *Small* (written for percussionist Evelyn Glennie). This second, longer version has much of the same content, but involves at least five times as many instruments.

Percussionists usually have the challenge of assembling and carting large instruments to and from a hall. I thought it would be much easier if they had one carry-on bag to hold all the instruments they needed, which, of course, they very much appreciate! There are approximately 15 small instruments per bag for each player.

–Joan Tower

VIJAY IYER

TORQUE (2018)

At the piano, I listen for how the contortions of the hand can suggest the surges of a body in motion. In my trio music, I'm often evolving rhythmic shapes, shaping gestural patterns with an embodied resonance, and striving to evoke specific qualities of movement with our performed rhythms. Someone once compared us to the Flying Karamazov Brothers, with their coordinated, cyclical, antiphonal actions. I see the work of the rhythm section as a ritual of collective

synchrony, aiming above all to generate a dance impulse for everybody in the room.

Torque, a twisting force on a body, seems to appear for the listener at music's formal boundaries, when one movement type gives way to another. This piece for Sō Percussion invites them to perform transformations that twist the music's temporal flow, bringing the micro-relational art of the rhythm section to this virtuosic quartet.

TORQUE was Commissioned by Andrew W. Siegel and premiered on June 22, 2018 at Caramoor Music Festival, Katonah NY.

–Vijay Iyer

JASON TREUTING

Nine Numbers 6 (2017)

All the pieces in the *Nine Numbers* series translate the 9 x 9 solutions of sudoku puzzles into notes and rhythms. The number nine, with its three sets of three, contains many wonderful symmetries and fractal-like characteristics. It allows for nesting structures at the largest and smallest levels.

In the pieces for fewer players, sometimes I ask the performers to help generate the score. In the solo, duo, and trio, the performers find their own puzzle solutions, and the score is a set of instructions to translate the numbers into music. In this sextet, I present the ensemble with a series of instructions to

accompany the sudoku realization. Different scores will exist for different ensembles. Most of the recognizable elements of the pieces will remain fixed, but surface details can change depending on the sudoku.

The complete work of nine pieces will be the second recording of my music on Cantaloupe Music after 2006's *Amid the Noise*, featuring performances by Sō Percussion, Tigie, the Meehan/Perkins Duo, Ji Hye Jung, Sandbox Percussion, and Adam Groh.

Tonight's piece, *Nine Numbers 6*, features the Meehan/Perkins duo, two founding members of Sō Percussion.

–Jason Treuting

ANGÉLICA NEGRÓN

gone (2018)

gone is a short piece for Sō Percussion inspired by things and people that have left us. It explores the visceral physical feeling of emptiness and absence, while at the same time searching for connections and meaning in those things and people that are left. It is written for the quartet accompanied by four solenoid-powered noise makers built by Nick Yulman in which different inanimate objects are placed on top of surface poppers to create fast, erratic and incisive rhythms. These four modular music devices operate as a ghost-like presence sometimes interacting with the members of Sō and sometimes

having a mind of their own. *gone* is a part of a larger scale work that I'm composing for Sō Percussion inspired by things I deeply care about but which I'm sometimes afraid to confront.

–Angélica Negrón

PAULINE OLIVEROS

Tuning Meditation (1971)

Each of the “Four Meditations for Orchestra” has been performed in versions for voices or smaller instrumental ensembles. There is no conventional notation used. The score consists of recipe-like instructions which are the same for each player. Each performer is responsible for their own part within the guidelines given. Since there is no written part to watch, all the performers' attention can be given to sound and invention.

The shape of each meditation emerges from the nature of the score guidelines and the dynamic interplay of the orchestra members. There is no melody, no harmony and no metrical rhythm. The direction is sound-oriented.

Each meditation has a specific focus. In the *Tuning Meditation*, players (or singers) are asked to tune exactly to another player or to contribute a pitch which no one else is sounding.

–Pauline Oliveros

IANNIS XENAKIS

“Peaux” from *Pleiades* (1978)

*Premiered May 1979 at the Opera du Rhin by
Les Percussions de Strasbourg.*

*American premiere 1981 at The Oberlin
Conservatory of Music by the Oberlin
Percussion Group.*

Iannis Xenakis is famous for his complex theories and mathematically derived compositional techniques -- his monumental percussion sextet *Pleiades* is a virtuosic display of those skills. But he was also a student revolutionary during World War II, the survivor of a traumatic and disfiguring mortar blast.

Xenakis wrote about the impersonal and beautiful violence of nature. In a remarkable demonstration of artistic will, he also converted his own experiences with human violence into a resource for musical expression. Although the following excerpt from his treatise “Formalized Music” doesn’t fully encapsulate *Pleiades*, it is an inspiring glimpse into Xenakis’ aesthetic world, at once both abstract and deeply personal:

“Everyone has observed the sonic phenomena of a political crowd of dozens or hundreds of thousands of people. The human river shouts a slogan in a uniform rhythm. Then another slogan springs from the head of the demonstration; it spreads towards the tail, replacing the first. A wave of transition thus passes from the head to the tail. The clamor fills the city, and the inhibiting force of voice and rhythm reaches a climax. It is an event of great power and beauty in its ferocity. Then the impact between the demonstrators and the enemy occurs. The perfect rhythm of the last slogan breaks up in a huge cluster of chaotic shouts, which also spreads to the tail. Imagine, in addition, the reports of dozens of machine guns and the whistle of bullets adding their punctuations to this total disorder. The crowd is then rapidly dispersed and after sonic and visual hell follows a detonating calm, full of despair, dust, and death. The statistical laws of these events, separated from their political or moral context, are the same as those of the cicadas or the rain. They are the laws of the passage from complete order to total disorder in a continuous or explosive manner. They are stochastic laws.”

–Adam Sliwinski

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SŌ PERCUSSION has redefined the scope of the modern percussion ensemble. Their repertoire ranges from “classics” of the 20th century, by John Cage, Steve Reich, and Iannis Xenakis, et al., to commissioning and advocating works by contemporary composers such as David Lang, Julia Wolfe, Steve Mackey, and Caroline Shaw, to distinctively modern collaborations with artists who work outside the classical concert hall, including Shara Nova, the choreographer Susan Marshall, Wilco’s Glen Kotche, The National’s Bryce Dessner, and many others.

Sō Percussion also composes and performs their own works, ranging from standard concert pieces to immersive multi-genre programs – including *Imaginary City*, *Where (we) Live*, and *A Gun Show*, which was presented in a multi-performance presentation as part of BAM’s 2016 Next Wave Festival. In these concert-length programs, Sō Percussion employs a distinctively 21st-century synthesis of original music, artistic collaboration, theatrical production values and visual art, into a powerful exploration of their own unique and personal creative experiences.

Last season, Sō performed the New York City premiere of David Lang’s *man made* with Louis Langrée and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra; toured a new work by Caroline Shaw with soprano Dawn Upshaw and pianist Gil Kalish to the Kennedy Center,

San Francisco Performances, UCLA, Penn State, and elsewhere; returned to Carnegie Hall with the JACK Quartet in a program of new works by Princeton composers Donnacha Dennehy and Dan Trueman; toured the United Kingdom with its original production exploring the community and culture of English coal mining country, *From Out a Darker Sea*; and more.

Recent highlights include an acclaimed “Trilogy” portrait at the Lincoln Center Festival; appearances at Bonnaroo, the Eaux Claires Festival, MassMoCA, and TED 2016; international tours to Poland and Ireland; performances of *man made* with conductor Gustavo Dudamel and the LA Phil; Bryce Dessner’s *Music for Wood and Strings* at the Barbican Centre in London; and an original score for a live performance and broadcast of WNYC’s *Radiolab* with hosts Jad Abumrad and Robert Krulwich at BAM.

Rooted in the belief that music is an essential facet of human life, a social bond, and an effective tool in creating agency and citizenship, Sō enthusiastically pursues a growing range of social and community outreach. Examples include their Brooklyn Bound presentations of younger composers; commitments to purchasing offsets to compensate for carbon-heavy activities such as touring travel; and leading their SōSI students in an annual food-packing drive, yielding up to 25,000 meals, for the Crisis Center of Mercer County through EndHungerNE.

The members of Sō Percussion are the Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence at Princeton University, where they offer educational work and present an annual series of concerts. They are also Co-Directors of the Percussion Department at the Bard College-Conservatory of Music, and run the annual Sō Percussion Summer Institute (SōSI, now in its ninth year), providing college-age composers and percussionists an immersive exposure to collaboration and project development.

Sō Percussion's 2018-2019 season is supported in part by awards from: The National Endowment for the Arts. To find out more about how National Endowment for the Arts grants impact individuals and communities, visit www.arts.gov; The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc.; The Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University; The Amphion Foundation; The Brookby Foundation; The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation; The Howard Gilman Foundation; New Music USA's NYC New Music Impact Fund, made possible with funding from The Scherman Foundation's Katharine S. and Axel G. Rosin Fund

Sō Percussion uses Vic Firth sticks, Zildjian cymbals, Remo drumheads, Estey Organs, and Pearl/Adams instruments. Sō Percussion would like to thank these companies for their generous support and donations.

TODD MEEHAN is the Associate Professor of Percussion and Division Head of Instrumental Studies at the Baylor University School of Music. He has performed throughout the United States, Europe, South America, and Asia as a soloist, orchestral, and chamber musician. Todd currently performs contemporary percussion chamber music with the Meehan/Perkins Duo and is the Principal Timpanist of the Waco Symphony Orchestra. He has commissioned new works for percussion by composers David Lang, Paul Lansky, Tristan Perich, Charles Wuorinen, Jonathan Leshnoff, and Alejandro Viñao, among many others. He has released recordings on Cantaloupe, Bridge, New World Records, and Physical Editions.

As an orchestral musician, he has performed with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, the Austin Symphony Orchestra, and is an alumnus of the Pacific Music Festival and the Round Top International Festival Institute. Todd is the founder of Liquidrum, a percussion company focused on performance, pedagogy, and percussion lifestyle.

Todd earned his Doctor of Musical Arts and Bachelor of Music degrees from the Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin, and his Master of Music degree from Yale University. He performs on Pearl Drums and Adams Musical Instruments, Zildjian cymbals, Remo drumheads, Vic Firth sticks and mallets, Black Swamp accessories, and Beetle Percussion products.

DOUGLAS PERKINS has been hailed as a “percussion virtuoso” by *The New York Times* and has appeared at venues of all types including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Alaskan Tundra, Central Park Lake, and countless others.

He founded the percussion quartet *Sō Percussion* and the Meehan/Perkins Duo, and performs with ensembles including Signal, eighth blackbird. Doug has premiered over 100 works with such composers as David Lang, Steve Reich, Paul Lansky, John Luther Adams, Nathan Davis, Christian Wolff, Sofia Gubaidulina, and Tristan Perich.

Doug’s recordings as a percussionist, conductor, and producer can be heard on the Bridge, Cantaloupe, Physical Editions, New Focus, and New World labels. His recording of Tristan Perich’s *Parallels* with the Meehan/

Perkins Duo was named one of *Rolling Stone’s* 20 Best Avant Records of 2015.

Lately, Doug has been organizing large-scale events that encourage new ways of experiencing live music. His productions of Xenakis’ *Persephassa* in Central Park Lake, as well as John Luther Adams’ *Inuksuit* and *Sila* have taken him to lead performances everywhere from Central Park and the Park Avenue Armory in New York City, to Land’s End in San Francisco and the top of the Italian Alps. In 2018, he conducted the premiere of Tristan Perich’s *Drift Multiply* for 50 violins and electronics for the Red Bull Music Festival.

Doug is Associate Professor of Percussion at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee. He is also the Director of the Chosen Vale International Percussion Seminar and was previously on the music faculty at Dartmouth College.

More Sō Percussion Performances at Princeton

December 10 and 12, 2018 at 8:00pm
*performing works by Princeton faculty and
graduate student composers*

presented by Princeton Sound Kitchen

Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall
Free; no tickets required

May 1, 2019 at 7:30pm
with **Nicole Lizée, composer/turntables**
*performing works by Nicole Lizée, Julia Wolfe,
and Sō Percussion*

Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall
Free; tickets required

Reserve tickets beginning April 30 at
music.princeton.edu