



SŌ PERCUSSION

The Quartet Reimagined

Steve Reich (b. 1936)

Music for Pieces of Wood (1973)

Viet Cuong (b. 1990)

Water, Wine, Brandy, Brine (2015)

Susan Marshall (b. 1958)

Construction (2017)

****Intermission****

Suzanne Farrin (b. 1976)

the diamond in the square (2019)

Julia Wolfe (b. 1958)

Forbidden Love (2019)

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

Sō Percussion is presented by the Williams College Department of Music
with the generous support of the W. Ford Schumann '50 Performing Arts Endowment.

Saturday, February 29, 2020

7:30 p.m.

Chapin Hall

Williamstown, Massachusetts

Please turn off cell phones.

No photography or recording is permitted.

Sō Percussion Program Notes
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***Music for Pieces of Wood* (1973) – Steve Reich**

Music for Pieces of Wood grows out of the same roots as *Clapping Music*: a desire to make music with the simplest possible instruments. The claves, or cylindrical pieces of hard wood, used here were selected for their particular pitches (A, B, C-sharp, D-sharp, and D-sharp an octave above), and for their resonant timbre. This piece is one of the loudest I have ever composed, but uses no amplification whatsoever. The rhythmic structure is based entirely on the process of rhythmic “build-ups” or the substitution of beats for rests, and is in three sections of decreasing pattern length: $\frac{6}{4}$, $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$.

—Steve Reich

***Water, Wine, Brandy, Brine* (2017) – Viet Cuong**

In 1641 a Jesuit scholar and priest named Athanasius Kircher published *Magnes (Magnets)*, a work that discusses various forms of attraction and, unsurprisingly, magnetism. One chapter, titled “the magnetism of music,” details an experiment in which he filled four wine glasses with liquids of various densities: aqua vitae (later referred to as brandy by Benjamin Franklin’s time), wine, pure water, and a course liquid such as saltwater or oil. Kircher observed that each solution reacted differently when played, and conclusively associated each with one of the four Greco-Roman humors. *Water, Wine, Brandy, Brine* explores the various sounds that can be produced from playing crystal glasses as musical instruments, from the bell-like sounds of “toasting” the glasses, to the theremin-like singing produced when the rims are played. This work was composed for Sō Percussion and premiered at Princeton University on May 18, 2015. Heartfelt thanks to Sō.

—Viet Cuong

***Construction* (2017) – Susan Marshall**

Construction is a music/dance work that offers the audience a visual way to equate space and time – the visual patterns we see are the rhythms we hear. The musicians’ instruments are mis-used microphones and amplifiers as well as a shifting musical notation/score consisting of colored tape placed on surfaces. As the musicians move through space to play the notation, they produce rhythms as well as a task-driven dance. The bare palette of sounds and movements highlights the musical construction and labor of the percussionists as they work without “instruments” to literally play the score. Intersecting and overlapping pathways are generated exposing the interactions and relationships between the performers.

John Cage’s *Construction* percussion ensemble pieces were experiments in using time to frame noise in a completely new way. This piece uses space to pose similar questions. How does movement and space frame or affect our experience of the sounds we hear?

The work you see tonight is distilled from of an evening-length work that also includes dancers from Susan Marshall & Company alongside Sō Percussion. In the larger work, three dancers move in their own systems of patterns, co-existing in the same space with the percussionists in a kind of dangerous but mutually agreeable symbiosis.

Special thanks to the many artists whose creative contributions in rehearsal were inspirational and whose insights have helped shape this work including: Kristen Hollinsworth, Luke Miller, Christopher Adams, Melanie George, Shawn Jaeger, Evan Gedrich and Alina Kido-Matzner and all the students in the 2016 course *Music and Dance: Choreographing Collaboration*. A huge thanks to Jason Wells for his tireless production support, to Rick Pilaro for the equipment support, and to Jeremy Olson for pulling all the many pieces together.

Commissioning Credit:

Construction was made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Joseph and Joan Cullman Foundation for the Arts, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, and the Harkness Foundation for Dance. *Construction* received creative and production support from Lumberyard Contemporary Performing Arts, Princeton University's Lewis Center for the Arts, and Princeton University’s Office of the Dean of the Faculty. Additional support for Susan Marshall & Company comes from the New York State Council on the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Stuart Coleman, Peter and Helen Haje, Marshall & Beverly Jones, Paul O'Neil, Sam Greenfield, Robert Dorf, David Farer, Charles Werner, Francine Kaufman, Kathe Thompson, Diana Wright, Edward Henry, and Martin Marciano.

Premiered on September 15th, 2017 at Richardson Auditorium, Princeton University.

the diamond in the square (2019) – Suzanne Farrin

The diamond in the square is a quilting pattern consisting of two objects. The inner square is rotated 45 degrees to become a diamond while the other forms its border. In Amish communities, the colors are usually bold and solid, giving way to intricate, nearly invisible stitching patterns that loop and connect the entire piece. The thread seems to create an invisible language whose contrasts are created through subtle changes in texture rather than color or pattern. You must adjust your eyes to see them. Diamonds in the square are found all over American folk art quilting. Probably like many of you, I recognized the image before I knew how to name it.

And perhaps also like you, I was raised in the atmospheres of women's work. The body hunched over a piece, the collecting and discussion of fabrics, yarn and needles, the meditation of the mind over repetitive tasks. I loved to participate in these projects, though I did not have nearly the skills of the women in my family. They could mend, create and transform objects (and people) through interwoven fibers. In this work, the fibers are given sound. A collection of strings from yarns to lobster cord move through the piano as if on a loom. The workers are hunched over their art and slowing separating from their physical bodies, which is exactly what I saw my grandmothers do as they sat in the evenings with their crochet, their knitting, their quilting, their...

—Suzanne Farrin

Commissioning Credit:

Co-commissioned by University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, The National Gallery, and The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

Forbidden Love (2019) – Julia Wolfe

Forbidden Love - all the things you aren't supposed to do to string instruments. My first year of college I wandered into a class called Creative Musicianship. One of the first assignments was to write a short piece using a musical instrument in an unusual nontraditional way. I thought “what?” So when Sō asked me to write them a piece using the four instruments of the string quartet, it was the second time this challenge was posed. The beautiful thing about Sō is that they are so open, so collaborative, full of adventure and can-do attitude. Together we discovered and drew out beautiful ethereal and crunchy sounds from this iconic quartet of instruments. In the process I developed a very personal new language (boings, szhings, hammering, and more).

Forbidden Love is dedicated to Jane Heirich - that wonderful teacher who in that life-changing class first asked me to step outside the box.

- Julia Wolfe

Forbidden Love Commissioning Credit:

Forbidden Love was co-commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and Carnegie Hall. The World Premiere was given by Sō Percussion at Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles on June 1, 2019.

Sō Percussion:

Through its sensational interpretations of modern classics, innovative multi-genre original productions, and “exhilarating blend of precision and anarchy, rigor and bedlam,” (*The New Yorker*), Sō Percussion has redefined the scope and role of the modern percussion ensemble, placing it at the leading edge of 21st-century music.

Sō’s repertoire ranges from 20th century works by John Cage, Steve Reich, and Iannis Xenakis, et al, to commissioning and advocating works by contemporary composers such as David Lang, Julia Wolfe, Steven Mackey, and Caroline Shaw, to distinctively modern collaborations with artists who work outside the classical concert hall, including Shara Nova, choreographer Susan Marshall, The National, Bryce Dessner, and many others.

Sō Percussion’s original productions – including *From Out A Darker Sea, Where (we) Live*, and Jason Treuting’s *Amid the Noise* – employ a distinctively 21st century palette of original music, artistic collaboration, theatrical production values and visual art, yielding powerful explorations of the human experience.

In December 2019, Sō Percussion made a triumphant return to Carnegie Hall for a sold-out performance of “A Percussion Century,” a sprawling exploration of the modern percussion repertoire including works by composers Cage, Lang, Reich, and Xenakis as well as works by Carlos Chávez, Johanna Beyer, and the New York premiere of Sō’s newest commission, *Forbidden Love*, a string quartet by Julia Wolfe. Other 19/20 highlights include a Miller Theatre Composer Portrait of frequent Sō collaborator, Caroline Shaw (with whom Sō has a new album due this season); David Lang’s *man made* and Lully’s *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* with Louis Langrée and the Cincinnati Symphony; dates in Paris, Lithuania, and throughout the US. Sō also collaborated with choreographer John Heginbotham on a new ballet, RACECAR, premiered as part of The Washington Ballet’s season-opening production, NEXTsteps.

This season Sō celebrates its sixth year as the Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence at Princeton University and welcomes the appointment of flutist, composer, and vocalist Nathalie Joachim as the ensemble’s inaugural Andrew W. Siegel Composition Fellow. 19/20 also marks the release of album collaborations with Dan Trueman and the JACK Quartet (*Songs that are Hard to Sing*, from New Amsterdam), and with indie duo Buke and Gase.

Sō has recorded more than 20 other albums; appeared at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Walt Disney Hall, the Barbican, the Eaux Claires Festival, MassMoCA,

and TED 2016; and performed with Jad Abumrad, JACK Quartet, the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, and the LA Phil and Gustavo Dudamel, among others.

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 Percussion enthusiastically pursues a growing range of social and community outreach. Examples include their Brooklyn Bound presentations of emerging artists and composers; commitments to purchasing offsets to compensate for carbon-heavy activities such as touring travel; and the Sō Percussion Summer Institute (SōSI), an intensive two-week chamber music seminar for percussionists and composers. Now in its second decade, SōSI features community performances, new work development, guest artist workshops, and an annual food-packing drive, yielding up to 25,000 meals, for the Crisis Center of Mercer County through the organization EndHungerNE.

Sō Percussion is
Eric Cha-Beach, Josh Quillen, Adam Sliwinski,
and Jason Treuting.

www.sopercussion.com

Sō Percussion wishes to thank all of our donors:

Sō Percussion's 2019-2020 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;
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- The Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University
- The Amphion Foundation
- The Brookby Foundation
- The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation
- The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation
- The Howard Gilman Foundation
- The Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation
- The Trust for Mutual Understanding
- The ASCAP Foundation Raymond Hubbell 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.”



Social Media:

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