

**MONDAY  
EVENING  
CONCERTS**

**MEREDITH MONK and  
JULIUS EASTMAN:  
[MASCULINE] / FEMENINE**

May 21, 2018 | 8:00 PM  
Zipper Concert Hall

MONDAY EVENING CONCERTS **MAY 21, 2018**

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**Meredith Monk & Julius Eastman: [Masculine] / Feminine**

Meredith Monk - **Selections from Piano Songs** (1971-2006) [25']

Ellis Island  
Obsolete Objects  
Railroad (Gloria Cheng, solo)  
Paris (Ursula Oppens, solo)  
Totentanz  
Phantom Waltz

Gloria Cheng, piano  
Ursula Oppens, piano

*intermission*

Julius Eastman - **Feminine** (1974) [70'] West Coast premiere

Echoi

Nathalie Joachim, flute  
Joshua Johnson, saxophone  
Brian Walsh, clarinet  
Linnea Powell, violin  
Adrienne Pope, viola  
Seth Parker Woods, cello  
Kathryn Schulmeister, double bass  
Dustin Donahue, synthesizer  
Richard Valitutto, piano  
Jonathan Hepfer, vibraphone

Seth Parker Woods, Nathalie Joachim, Richard Valitutto, Jonathan Hepfer - co-directors

This concert is made possible, in part, by a grant from the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs.

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## PROGRAM NOTES

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### **Meredith Monk (b. 1942) - Piano Songs**

I studied piano throughout my childhood with Gershon Konikow and Marcia Polis. Always drawn to 20th century music, particularly Mompou, Satie and Bartók, I began writing short piano studies in high school and college. After many years of concentrating on composing music for unaccompanied voice and then voice and organ, I came back to the piano with *Paris* in 1972. After that, I began writing short piano pieces, each a world with its own topography, texture and mood.

In 1981, I composed a two piano piece, *Ellis Island*, later recording the two parts myself by overdubbing in the studio. That experience inspired me to compose more music for two pianos. I delved into different relationships and possibilities between them; material passed back and forth, dialogues, interlocking phrases, shifts of figure and ground. In some pieces, I emphasized the individuality of each piano, writing for one player as the "singer", the other as the "accompaniment"; in other pieces I wanted the two pianos to make one large sound.

Directness, purity, asymmetry, and above all, transparency have always been important to me. The surface of the music is seemingly simple but the intricacy of the detail and the combination of restraint and expressivity challenge the performer. Every gesture is exposed and clear.

I would like to thank Ursula Oppens and Bruce Brubaker for their remarkable artistry and sensitivity in bringing *Piano Songs* to life.

- Meredith Monk (Liner notes to her album *Piano Songs*, recorded by Ursula Oppens and Bruce Brubaker)

### **Julius Eastman (1940-1990) - Femenine**

I met Julius Eastman in early 1981 at a rehearsal for a theatre piece that we were both hired to be vocalists in. At the first rehearsal, at 10 a.m., Julius breezed in, dressed in black leather and chains, drinking scotch! That was my introduction to the outrageousness that was Julius Eastman, who strove to push his identities as a gay black man and musician to the fullest. At that time he was a prominent member of New York's downtown music scene as a composer, conductor, and performer, but he also performed in such places as Lincoln Center with the New York Philharmonic and could be heard in music played in discos.

1981 was a busy, but fairly typical year for him. He had a full evening of his compositions performed at The Kitchen in New York. He performed a solo concert of vocal and piano improvisations in Zurich. He was performing with Meredith Monk in *Turtle Dreams* and was on her recording of *Dolmen Music* that had just been issued. His piece, *The Holy Presence of Joan d'Arc*, for ten cellos, was premiered and performed for five nights at the The Kitchen with the choreographer Andy de Groat. *Joan* was later performed at the New Music America festival in San Francisco. He conducted the epic recording of Arthur Russell's *Tower of Meaning*, and he performed on Russell's *Dinosaur L's 24 ->24 Music*, which was being played in clubs around Manhattan.

Two short years later, though, he had basically dropped out of the music scene. His final years were a life that had spiraled out of control, to the point that he was occasionally living in Tompkins Square Park in New York's East Village. His possessions, including music scores and recordings, had been dumped onto the street by the City Sheriff when he was evicted from his apartment in late 1981 or early 1982. And it was only nine years later that he died, alone, in a Buffalo hospital, his death unremarked upon by anyone for almost a year.

It was against this backdrop that I began to start trying to track down his music in 1998, when I wanted to find a recording and/or score of *Joan*, which had left a big impression on me. I learned that the composer Lois V. Vierk had a tape of it, but when she went to make a copy for me, she found the cassette box empty, the cassette left in some unknown tape machine. This was the first of many obstacles that I was to encounter while trying to find Eastman's music (and that continues to this day). Vierk put me in touch with C. Bryan Rulon, who had originally given her the tape. While Rulon was making a dub for me, we talked about Eastman's music and life, and that was when I learned that much of his music had been lost - Eastman had made no effort to recover any of it when evicted. Upon realizing how dire the situation was, I started trying to track down as much of his music as I could, as I knew that the more time passed, the more difficult it would be to find.

Thus, I began what turned out to be a quixotic search for Eastman's music that peaked in 2005, with the first commercial release of his compositions *Unjust Malaise*, a 3-CD set on New World Records. I began a series of what I came to regard as a vicious circle of phone calls and letters. One person would direct me to another, who would then direct me to another, until at some point I'd be referred back to the original person I'd contacted, a cycle which could take a year or more (this was before email, the web, and Google were ubiquitous). It was not only frustrating, but shocking, to see how quickly the work of a composer who had been such a vital member of the artistic community could disappear, falling

through the cracks of communal memory. Until the set was released, Eastman was best known as the virtuoso singer in the first recording of Peter Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, which he also performed in concert, including with the New York Philharmonic with Pierre Boulez conducting and the Los Angeles Philharmonic with Zubin Mehta. The CD release turned out not to be the final step of my searching, though, but the beginning of a process of discovering and rediscovering his music that continues to this day.

One of the few recordings that has surfaced since the release of *Unjust Malaise* is *Femenine* (1974), which is a pivotal piece of Eastman's. It is a transitional work between *Stay On It* (1973) and *Crazy Nigger* (1978), *Evil Nigger* (1979), and *Gay Guerrilla* (1979), which can all be heard on *Unjust Malaise*. The most obvious link between *Femenine* and *Stay On It* is Eastman having the percussionist mechanically play the tambourine in a constant pattern in the last few minutes of *Stay On It* and the mechanized sleigh bells throughout *Femenine*. Eastman had been playing around with making jingling mechanical contraptions that could be played with no nuance, and he succeeded in *Femenine*, as they lasted for more than seventy minutes without slowing down. A commentary on rigid process minimalist? Or perhaps he just wanted a continual pulse. The other obvious connection between the two pieces is the role the vibraphone plays - a motif is basically hammered out throughout both pieces, anchoring and cueing the other performers.

While *Stay On It* has pop music and theatrical elements, using melodic riffs, *Femenine* is more pitch-based. They both have palpable downbeats at times, with the other three having more of a pulse, a tactus, something familiar to Eastman not only from performing Terry Riley's *In C*, but also from singing early choral music. There is no extant score for *Stay On It*. The other four pieces do have scores with bar lines, but no time signatures. In *Femenine* the bar lines indicate phrases, and in the other three they indicate time intervals, all four pieces using clock timings. Even with a score, it can be confusing, as when in *Femenine* the score jumps from 33:30 to 41:45, with no indication of what to play in that interval. The final time designation is 65:20, but there is a little coda after it, with no indication of timing, only an indication that the pianist will cue the players.

A pattern that continued from works even before *Stay On It*, was the gradual winnowing out of free improvisation (except in the solo performances he gave), so that in *Macle* (1971), there are instructions to tell a story, and other vague instructions. But starting with *Femenine*, and continuing forward, the "improvisational" elements consisted mostly of choosing a pitch in a chord or what octave to play a note in. These four pieces also used what Eastman termed an organic process - each section adding material, while keeping the previous material (or, conversely, subtracting material as the piece ended). *Femenine* also differs in that the pianist plays an expanded part that is not notated, but which fleshes out and embellishes the material being played by the other performers.

This recording is from a concert held on November 6, 1974 in Albany, New York organized by Julie Kabat, who had attended Chocorua, a 1973 summer workshop in New Hampshire, in order to study with Eastman. Eastman's *Joy Boy* was also performed that night. The S.E.M. Ensemble, which had a flexible membership, performed, with the addition of students from the University at Buffalo. Memories are vague as to who all of the performers were, but there were twelve to fifteen participants. It's difficult to even figure out what instruments are playing at times, since there are so many performers, complicated by the use of a synthesizer with its changing timbres. Eastman was insistent that soup be served during the concert, and went to Kabat's house to prepare it himself. In the recording you can hear that it was an informal occasion, with some talking and moving about during the performance. People remember Eastman wearing a dress.

All of this exemplifies the dichotomy between his music and the way he presented and named things - the titles of his piece, the informality of the concert, and the dress-wearing, caused discomfort for some of the more conservative audience members, although Eastman's stated aim with *Femenine* was to please listeners, saying of the piece that "the end sounds like the angels opening up heaven...should we say euphoria?"

- Mary Jane Leach (Liner notes to the 1974 recording of *Femenine* on *Frozen Reeds*) (Valley Falls, New York, June 2016)

## BIOGRAPHIES

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**Ursula Oppens**, a legend among American pianists, is widely admired particularly for her original and perceptive readings of new music, but also for her knowing interpretations of the standard repertoire. No other artist alive today has commissioned and premiered more new works for the piano.

A prolific and critically acclaimed recording artist with five Grammy nominations, Ms. Oppens most recently released a new recording of Frederic Rzewski's *The People United Will Never Be Defeated*, nominated for a Grammy in 2016, and *Piano Songs*, a collaboration with Meredith Monk. Earlier Grammy nominations were for *Winging It: Piano Music of John Corigliano*; *Oppens Plays Carter*; a recording of the complete piano works of Elliott Carter for Cedille Records (also was named a "Best of the Year" selection by *The New York Times* long-time music critic Allan Kozinn); *Piano Music of Our Time* featuring compositions by John Adams, Elliott Carter, Julius Hemphill, and Conlon Nancarrow for the Music and Arts label, and her cult classic *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* by Frederic Rzewski on Vanguard. Ms. Oppens recently added to her extensive discography by releasing a two-piano CD for Cedille Records devoted to *Visions de l'Amen* of Olivier Messiaen and Debussy's *En blanc et noir* performed with pianist Jerome Lowenthal.

At the start 2017-18 season, Ms. Oppens will present the New York premiere of Laura Kaminsky's *Fantasy* for solo piano at the Bargemusic Labor Day Festival celebrating women composers and musicians. She will appear at Hayden's Ferry Chamber Music Series in Tempe, AZ, where she will be joined by pianist Jerome Lowenthal and cellist Evan Drachman, in a program inspired by William Kapell, the great American pianist killed in a plane crash in 1953 at age 31 on his way back from a concert tour of Australia. Ms. Oppens will travel to Bowling Green State University for the 7th Annual David Dubois Piano Competition to perform Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos with pianist Phillip Moll, as well as various two-piano selections by Schumann, Poulenc, Lutoslawski and two short new solo works by Samuel Adler. Her season concludes with engagements at Humboldt State University, University of Washington, and Oberlin Conservatory.

Highlights of last season included appearances in Bargemusic's Masterworks series, where she performed seminal works by Elliott Carter and Alexander Scriabin, as well as in "Bag of Tails and Occasional Pieces," a concert presented founder of Open G Records to honor the piano music of Pulitzer Prize and MacArthur Fellowship-winning composer John Harbison.

Over the years, Ms. Oppens has premiered works by such leading composers as John Adams, Luciano Berio, William Bolcom, Anthony Braxton, Elliott Carter, John Corigliano, Anthony Davis, John Harbison, Julius Hemphill, Laura Kaminsky, Tania Leon, György Ligeti, Witold Lutoslawski, Harold Meltzer, Meredith Monk, Conlon Nancarrow, Tobias Picker, Bernard Rands, Frederic Rzewski, Allen Shawn, Alvin Singleton, Joan Tower, Lois V Vierk, Amy Williams, Christian Wolff, Amnon Wolman, and Charles Wuorinen.

As an orchestral guest soloist, Ms. Oppens has performed with virtually all of the world's major orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the American Composers Orchestra, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), and the orchestras of Chicago, Cleveland, San Francisco, and Milwaukee. Abroad, she has appeared with such ensembles as the Berlin Symphony, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Deutsche Symphonie, the Scottish BBC, and the London Philharmonic Orchestras. Ms. Oppens is also an avid chamber musician and has performed with the Arditti, Cassatt, JACK, Juilliard, and Pacifica quartets, among other chamber ensembles.

Ursula Oppens joined the faculty of Mannes College, The New School, in fall 2017, and is a Distinguished Professor of Music at Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center in New York City. From 1994 through the end of the 2007-08 academic year she served as John Evans Distinguished Professor of Music at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. In addition, Ms. Oppens has served as a juror for many international competitions, such as the Concert Artists Guild, Young Concert Artists, Young Pianists Foundation (Amsterdam), and Cincinnati Piano World Competition. Ms. Oppens lives in New York City.

Grammy-winning pianist **Gloria Cheng** has been a recitalist at the Ojai Festival, William Kapell Festival, and Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music, and has performed on leading concert series including Carnegie Hall's Making Music, Cal Performances, San Francisco Performances, and Stanford Lively Arts.

In recital and on recording Cheng explores meaningful interrelations between composers, as in her 2008 release, *Piano Music of Esa-Pekka Salonen, Steven Stucky, and Witold Lutoslawski*, which captured the Grammy for Best Instrumental Soloist Performance [without Orchestra]. Her second Grammy nomination followed for her 2013 recording, *The Edge of Light: Messiaen/Saariaho*. 2015 saw the launch of *MONTAGE: Great Film Composers and the Piano*, a themed recital, CD, and award-winning film (Breakwater Studios), featuring works composed for her by Bruce Broughton, Don Davis, Alexandre Desplat, Michael Giacchino, Randy Newman, and John Williams. The film was broadcast six times during the spring of 2017 on PBS SoCal.

Cheng was the last soloist to appear in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion with the Los Angeles Philharmonic during its historic final concerts there in 2003 under Pierre Boulez; at Mr. Boulez's personal invitation she performed Messiaen's *Oiseaux exotiques* with the orchestra. Cheng's concerto debut with the L.A. Philharmonic was in 1998 under the direction of Zubin Mehta. Other concerto engagements have included appearances with the Louisville Orchestra, Indianapolis, Shanghai, Pasadena, Long Beach, and Pacific symphonies.

Recent seasons have seen Cheng and pianist/composer Thomas Adès join together to premiere of Adès' 2-piano *Concert Paraphrase on Powder Her Face*, the premiere of the late Steven Stucky's *Piano Sonata* on the Piano Spheres series, and coast-to-coast screening/recitals of *MONTAGE: Great Film Composers and the Piano*, with one or more of the celebrated composers in attendance. Cheng has curated programs such as *Music at Black Mountain College* for the Hammer Museum; *BEYOND MUSIC: Composition and Performance in the Age of Augmented Reality* at UCLA, an international gathering of composers and media artists featuring the music of Kaija Saariaho and Jean-Baptiste Barriere; and a daylong symposium at UCLA celebrating the 70th birthday of composer John Adams entitled *Inside the (G)Earbox*.

In Los Angeles Cheng has been a frequent guest on the L.A. Philharmonic Green Umbrella series, performing works such as Elliott Carter's *Double Concerto for Piano and Harpsichord* conducted by Oliver Knussen, John Cage's *Concerto for Prepared Piano*, and the world premiere of Esa-Pekka Salonen's *Dichotomie*, composed for and dedicated to her. Cheng's countless premieres, commissions, and dedications come from a varied and distinguished roster of composers who include John Adams, Gerald Barry, George Benjamin, Gavin Bryars, Daniel Strong Godfrey, John Harbison, Joan Huang, William Kraft, Veronika Krausas, Magnus Lindberg, James Newton Jr., Bernard Rands, Terry Riley, Carl Stone, Steven Stucky, Stephen Andrew Taylor, Claude Vivier, Andrew Waggoner, and Gernot Wolfgang.

Cheng received her B.A. in Economics from Stanford University, followed by graduate degrees in Music from UCLA, where she studied with Aube Tzerko, and from the University of Southern California as a student of John Perry. She teaches at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music where she has initiated classes that unite performers and composers. She is often invited to speak as an advocate for contemporary music, and in 2012 served as Regents Lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley.

Hailed as "a cellist of power and grace" (*The Guardian*) and possessing "mature artistry and willingness to go to the brink," **Seth Parker Woods** has established a reputation as a versatile artist straddling several genres. Outside of solo performances, he has performed with the Ictus Ensemble (Brussels), Ensemble L'Arsenale, zone Experimental, Basel Sinfonietta, New York City Ballet, Ensemble LPR and Orchestra of St. Luke's. A fierce advocate for contemporary arts, he has collaborated and worked with a wide range of artists ranging from Louis Andriessen, Elliott Carter, Heinz Holliger, G.F. Haas, Helmut Lachenmann, Klaus Lang, and Peter Eotvos to Peter Gabriel, Sting, Lou Reed, Dame Shirley Bassey, Rachael Yamagata, as well as visual artists Vanessa Beecroft, Jack Early, Adam Pendleton and Aldo Tambellini. With a Ph.D. from the University of Huddersfield, his principal teachers were Thomas Demenga, Lucas Fels, Frederik Zlotkin, and Daniel Morganstern. His debut solo album, *asinglewordisnotenough* (Confront Recordings-London) has garnered great acclaim since its release in 2016, and he has been profiled in *The Guardian*, *5against4*, *I Care If You Listen*, *Musical America*, and *Strings Magazine* among others.

With a focus on contemporary keyboard performance, including organ and harpsichord, Grammy® nominated pianist **Richard Valitutto** is a soloist, chamber musician, vocal accompanist, and composing/improvising creative. He has cultivated a stylistically omnivorous taste and a technical dexterity that have enabled him to work with numerous composers including John Adams, Brian Ferneyhough, Sofia Gubaidulina, John Harbison, David Lang, George Lewis, Meredith Monk, and Steve Reich. He has premiered works by Timo Andres, Christopher Cerrone, Nicholas Deyoe, David Brynjar Franzson, Ted Hearne, Missy Mazzoli, Andrew Nathaniel McIntosh, and Wolfgang von Schweinitz, among many others.

Richard has performed with the LA Philharmonic, Opera Omaha, Monday Evening Concerts, Piano Spheres, Omaha Under the Radar, wasteLAnd, Brooklyn Art Song Society, MicroFest, People Inside Electronics, and Jacaranda. Additional projects include productions by Beth Morrison Projects and LA Opera, The Industry, The Hammer Museum, LACMA, and the Green Umbrella series. He is featured on critically acclaimed recordings for Bridge, New World, hat[now]ART, Populist, pMENTUM, and Bôlt Records labels. His compositions have been performed by What's Next? Ensemble, Panic Duo, and wild Up Modern Music Collective. Richard is a founding member of gnarwhallaby, called "startlingly versatile" by the NY Times in their Carnegie Hall debut.

**Jonathan Hepfer** is a percussionist, conductor, and concert curator specializing in avant-garde and experimental music. He began playing classical music at age 17 after discovering the work of John Cage while studying at SUNY Buffalo. Subsequently, Jonathan attended Oberlin Conservatory, UC – San Diego and the Musikhochschule Freiburg (with the support of a two-year DAAD fellowship), where he studied with Michael Rosen (craft), Steven Schick (interpretation) and Bernhard Wulff (metaphysics), respectively. Other major influences have included Jan Williams (aesthetics), Lewis Nielson (ethics), Brian Alegant (analysis), and William O'Brien (philosophy).

Jonathan is the Artistic Director of Monday Evening Concerts in Los Angeles, on which he performs regularly. He has taken part in the US premieres of major works by Salvatore Sciarrino, Gérard Grisey, György Kurtág, Rolf Riehm, Jo Kondo, Aldo Clementi, Klaus Lang, Ramon Lazkano, Francisco Guerrero, Thomas Meadowcroft and Simon Steen-Andersen. His collaborators have included such luminaries as Alexei Lubimov, Séverine Ballon, Natalia Pschenitschnikova, Mario Caroli and Nicholas Isherwood.

Jonathan is the director of Echoi, a flexible chamber ensemble which he co-founded in 2006 with Alice Teyssier. He is also a member of the percussion ensemble red fish blue fish, and has collaborated as a soloist, chamber musician and conductor with ensembles such as Talea, Ensemble Mosaik, Ensemble SurPlus, asamisimasa, hand werk, the Formalist Quartet, ICE and Signal. From 2011-13, he was a member of the Freiburg Percussion Ensemble, which regularly toured central Europe, as well as Vietnam, Indonesia, Mongolia and Ukraine.

As a soloist, Jonathan has focused extensively on the works of the composers Pierluigi Billone, Walter Zimmermann, Iannis Xenakis, Brian Ferneyhough, Helmut Lachenmann, Giacinto Scelsi, Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, Georges Aperghis and Vinko Globokar. He has given solo performances at the Stone in New York, Harvard University, the Tonhalle Düsseldorf (Germany), the Odessa Philharmonic Theater (Ukraine), and the National History Museum in Ulan Bator (Mongolia).

Notable projects have included co-directing Steve Reich's *Drumming* for Jacaranda Music in Santa Monica, performing Pierre Boulez' *Le Marteau sans Maître* in Switzerland, Germany, Japan, Israel and New York (under the direction of the composer), music-directing a live performance of Samuel Beckett's radio play *Words and Music* in Los Angeles, performing Morton Feldman's *Crippled Symmetry* and *For Philip Guston* in Buffalo, San Diego, Freiburg, LA and Marfa (Texas), and performing in a production of Shakespeare's *Othello* at the Old Globe Theater in San Diego, directed by Barry Edelstein.

Jonathan has participated in artistic residencies at Harvard, Oberlin, SUNY Buffalo, and the universities of Minnesota, Huddersfield and Leeds. He has contributed articles to *Percussive Notes* and *Die Musik von Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf*, and has written liner notes on Pierluigi Billone's music for Kairos. Jonathan has also had the privilege of documenting the oral histories of the first generation of eminent European percussion soloists (namely, Christoph Caskel, Sylvio Gualda, Jean-Pierre Drouet, Gaston Sylvestre, Maurizio Ben-Omar), and will be releasing a book about this generation in the near future.

In 2015, he joined the faculty of Cal Arts.

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