

**MONDAY  
EVENING  
CONCERTS**

**SCIARRINO | GRISEY | GESUALDO:  
SONGS FOR CROSSING THE THRESHOLD**

**DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF:  
PIERRE BOULEZ (1925-2016)**

January 11, 2016      8:00 PM  
Zipper Hall at the Colburn School

## MONDAY EVENING CONCERTS **JANUARY 11, 2016**

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Salvatore Sciarrino (b. 1947) - **Un fruscio lungo trent'anni** (1967-1999) Los Angeles Premiere

Eric Derr, *percussion*  
Sean Dowgray, *percussion*  
James Beauton, *percussion*  
Kevin Schlossman, *percussion*

Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) - **"A Girolamo Mercuriale, Padova"** (1583) from *Lettere Poetiche*

Gian Maria Annovi, *reader*

Salvatore Sciarrino - **Le voci sottovetro - Elaborazioni da Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa** (1999) Los Angeles Premiere

I. Gagliarda del Principe di Venosa  
II. Tu m'uccidi, o crudele  
III. Canzon francese del Principe  
IV. Moro, lasso

### **MEC Ensemble**

Alice Teyssier, *voice*  
Christine Tivolacci, *bass flute*  
Claire Chenette, *English horn*  
Curt Miller, *bass clarinet*  
Brendan Nguyen, *piano*  
Eric Derr, *percussion*  
Erik Carlson, *violin*  
Keir GoGwilt, *viola*  
Judith Hamann, *cello*  
Jonathan Hepfer, *conductor*

*intermission*

G rard Grisey (1946-1998) - **Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil** (1997-8) Los Angeles Premiere

Pr lude  
I. La Mort de l'ange  
Interlude  
II. La Mort de la civilization  
Interlude  
III. La Mort de la voix  
Faux interlude  
IV. La Mort de l'humanit   
Berceuse

### **MEC Ensemble**

Alice Teyssier, *voice*  
Christine Tivolacci, *flute*  
Aaron Smith, *trumpet*  
Erik Carlson, *violin*  
Ryan Muncy and Benjamin Sorrell, *saxophones*  
Curt Miller and Michiko Ogawa, *bass clarinets*  
Luke Storm and Doug Tornquist, *tubas*  
Judith Hamann, *cello*  
Matt Kline, *contrabass*  
Tasha Smith Godinez, *harp*  
James Beauton, Eric Derr and Sean Dowgray, *percussion*  
Jonathan Hepfer, *conductor*

## PROGRAM NOTES

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"After death comes nothing hoped for nor imagined." ~ Heraclitus

### Crossings

Born within ten months of one another, Salvatore Sciarrino and Gérard Grisey have become recognized in the twenty-first century as the most individual composers of their immediate generation, and also the most influential – a status fully acquired in Grisey's case only posthumously. They have both been strongly represented by Monday Evening Concerts in recent seasons.

Being each distinctive, they could hardly be more different. Where Grisey's music is emphatic, Sciarrino's typically quivers, and where the Frenchman concentrated formidable energy into relatively few endeavors, the Italian has an enormous and diverse catalog. Shared features, though, exist too. One is a confidence in belonging to – and contributing to – a long cultural history, going back to classical Greece and even, for Grisey, to ancient Egypt. Another is the equal confidence that it is possible to speak anew, in terms never heard before, of what has been on this earth for very much longer: the human being.

The works on tonight's program all come from the late 1990s, when the approach of a new millennium, and the arrival of a vast new memory machine in the internet, seems to have encouraged artists to look simultaneously far back into the past and on into the future – a posture to be achieved without turning the head.

### Salvatore Sciarrino (b.1947) - *Un fruscio lungo trent'anni*

Sciarrino wrote this piece for four percussionists in 1999 on the basis of a draft from 1967; the result plays for close on fifteen minutes. As usual, this highly literate composer's own note renders any other commentary superfluous:

The title alone – "A Thirty-Year Rustling" – tells the story of the composition, whose nucleus goes back to an era that was about to end. From yellowed pages, signs proclaim the strangeness of my own youth. And the eyes have changed. Other eyes, other thoughts.

In 1967 my style was beginning to catch fire, even if that might not have been seen by everyone. Useless, though, to try to recognize myself after so many years. So what did I want to do with this fragment? Follow up some ideas that still held the potential of danger and questioning.

Lit through new apertures, some features of the old piece come into relief: only in this way was it possible to retrieve the old parts and redefine the project in general. It may be surprising today to find ecological sounds (green pine branches, dry leaves, water) mixed with those of orthodox musical instruments, grouped according to their material construction (wood, skin, glass, metal). The instruments are mostly stroked, not beaten. Then there come those inexhaustible sources of corporeal vibration that are the bass drums. Their sound is alarming because unnamable, like space. An extreme tendency towards the imperceptible is countered and balanced by violent elements, such as breakages, metal tubes, guns.

The attitude of meditation through sound I always found congenial. Imagine sitting on the bank of a river. Not a real river but a river of music. Imagine sitting in the front row at a concert. Not a real concert but water and wind. There are sounds into which you dive with delight. But there is one thing without which no pleasure in sound makes sense, and that is the intensity of the silence.

The tension is the thought of the listener made perceptible by the player.

### Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) - "A Girolamo Mercuriale, Padova" (1583) from *Lettere Poetiche*

Torquato Tasso was a renowned Italian poet of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, who suffered from what is now believed to be bipolar disorder. Legends describe him wandering the streets of Rome half mad, convinced that he was being persecuted. He was sent into a lengthy imprisonment at Ferrara's Santa Anna lunatic asylum; while he was there, Tasso wrote a letter to the physician Girolamo Mercuriale about the symptoms of an "unknown" illness that made him believe that he had been "bewitched". Released in 1586, Tasso died a few days before he was due to be crowned as the king of poets by the Pope.

### Salvatore Sciarrino - *Le voci sottovoce* - *Elaborazioni da Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa (1999)*

Subtitled "elaborations of Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa for voice and ensemble", this work again comes with an introduction by the composer:

One of my theater works, *Luci mie traditrici*, is based on a little-known script from the seventeenth century, *Il tradimento per l'onore* by Cicognini. In this play, written more than half a century after the events, the clamor of the bloody story of Gesualdo still resounds. It was inevitable that, during my work's long gestation, I reacquainted myself with the music of that long-gone

composer. I began work on the opera, and spoke of it with friends under the title "Gesualdo." Then I learned that Schnittke was composing his Gesualdo. I therefore decided to eliminate all reference to Gesualdo and to replace his music with the equally hallucinatory Claude Le Jeune. At the same time, however, the familiarity I had acquired with Gesualdo bore fruit, of highly diverse kinds. Among others, a short group of elaborations, *Le voci sottovetro* (Voices Beneath Glass, 1998) and *Terribile e spaventosa storia del Principe di Venosa e della bella Maria* (1999), music for a Sicilian puppet show.

To what does this title refer, *Le voci sottovetro*? To shut in a bottle a voice, the essence of a life, might call to mind the genii Solomon imprisoned and threw to the bottom of the sea. From these legends came the teeming fantasy literature of Islamic peoples. Then there came to mind the Baroque taste for the monstrous and spectacular, which as we know was intertwined with science and the need to examine life in every particular. Then there was a question to be asked of the madrigal: What remains of ancient voices? Do they simply vanish into transparency or might we perceive a residue, however small, not yet evaporated from the container?

To speak in general, the greatest artists are those who change the course of history and risk the most (above all, in having the courage to be themselves) and thereby anticipate the creators of years to come. Among the great mass of artists, this group of the most imaginative stands out, constituting a sort of family, with close relationships and a tight kinship despite the centuries that separate the individuals.

So it is with an artist as cultivated and refined as Gesualdo. The listener is enthralled by a singular attractive power, that of being stunned by waves of associations with more recent composers. We can recognize in Gesualdo the extravagance of Vivaldi and Domenico Scarlatti, Schubert and the late Beethoven, the scent of the late Romantics or of art nouveau, the climate of expressionism.

A couple of words on the originals and the adaptations: The *Gagliarda del Principe di Venosa* was presumably written for four viols. Of the madrigal *Tu m'uccidi, o crudele* (Book V, No. 17) there remain only the presence of the voice, some mutilated vocal fragments, some key words. The *Canzon francese del Principe* is by genre a piece for lute or keyboard; simply the change to instrumental breath, I feel, shines a different light on the musical substance, the alternation between imitation and fioritura, the unexpected chromatic trills. *Moro, lasso, al mio duolo* (Book VI, No. 17) has been turned into a song for voice and instruments.

These free elaborations, their illusory perspectives, may surprise the listener, and yet were not made to do so; rather, they stem from a conviction that old music can be transformed and brought to life for another season, through contact with the spirit of modernity.

#### **G rard Grisey (1946-98) - *Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil***

Composed between 1996 and 1998, this set of "four songs to cross the threshold" was the last work Grisey completed. He died three months before the first performance, leaving the score and a program note, as follows:

I conceived *Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil* as a musical meditation on death in four parts: the death of the angel, the death of civilization, the death of the voice and the death of humanity. The four movements are separated by short interludes, variable dustings of sound, designed to maintain a level of tension slightly above that of the clean but relaxed silence found in concert halls between the end of one movement and the start of the next. The texts chosen come from four civilizations (Christian, Egyptian, Greek, Mesopotamian) and are all fragmentary responses to the inevitability of death. The make-up of the instrumental ensemble was decided by a musical need to contrast the lightness of the soprano voice with a sound mass that would be deep and heavy but at the same time sumptuous and multicolored.

*La Mort de l'ange*, after Christian Guez-Ricord's *Les Heures de la nuit*. I knew Guez-Ricord when we were both at the Villa M dicis in Rome between 1972 and 1974, and several times we thought about working together. Then our paths diverged, and my researches took me away for a while from vocal music. His death in 1988 at the end of a tragic life overwhelmed me. Even more so did these few lines, coming as the almost silent apogee of an output that was dense, mystical, heavy with Judaeo-Christian imagery, almost medieval in its ceaseless quest for the grail.

The death of the angel is in fact the most terrible of all, for it has to do with mourning our dreams. In its minimalism, this calm and perfectly constructed poem dictated the proportions of the movement's temporal structures. More than that, these structures are to remain like a watermark through the next two movements. One may note the surplus time in the metrical structure, a slight overflowing and especially a fatal syntactical error that signals where death stops the poem and the poet.

*La Mort de la civilisation*, after Egyptian sarcophagi of the Middle Empire. I have frequented ancient Egyptian civilization to the extent of already devoting three pieces to it, including *Jour, contr-jour*, a distant echo from reading the Book of the Dead. Reading now a long archaeological catalogue of hieroglyphic fragments recovered from the sides of sarcophagi or from mummy bindings, I immediately felt the wish to compose this slow litany. The music is almost diatonic, though spiced with micro-intervals, and the pitches of the chords come from the first movement's "waste."

*La Mort de la voix*, after Erinna. A long-gone Greek poet of the sixth century B.C., of whom virtually nothing is known, Erinna left us these two lines. Emptiness, echo, voice, sounds' shadows and silence are all so familiar to a composer like me that Erinna's lines seemed to me to be waiting for musical translation. Have so many centuries done anything to alter our grief?

*La Mort de l'humanité*, after the Epic of Gilgamesh. In the Epic of Gilgamesh the immortal Utanapisti tells the hero the "secret of the gods": the flood. Like Noah in the Bible, Gilgamesh is saved from a catastrophe of which it is said that the gods themselves were terrified. The Great Mother Goddess screams as if in labor, and the music substitutes for a reading of the disaster in that the voice appears in the interstices of the fracas. Gale, hammering rain, hurricane, flood, storm, massacre – these elements give way to a large-scale polyphony where every level follows its own temporal course.

Almost like a fifth song, again "diatonic," the tender lullaby that seals the cycle is intended not to assist sleep but to awaken. Music for the dawn of a humanity finally released from nightmare. I dare hope this lullaby will not be among those we will sing tomorrow to the first human clones when we have to disclose the dire genetic and psychological violence done them by a humanity desperately enquiring into fundamental taboos.

Program notes © Paul Griffiths. Paul Griffiths is an acclaimed writer on contemporary and classical music whose books include *A Concise History of Western Music* and *The Penguin Companion to Classical Music*. He is also known as a librettist (Elliott Carter's *What Next?*) and novelist. In 2002, Griffiths was honored by the French government as a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

## TRANSLATIONS

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### Torquato Tasso - *A Girolamo Mercuriale*

I have been ill for several years and I do not know the nature of my illness. I am convinced, however, that I have been bewitched. Whatever the reason of my misfortune may be, the symptoms are the following: burning innards and some blood loss, I suffer ringing in the ears and head, sometimes so loud that it seems as if I have one of those weight driven timepieces with me; continuous hallucinations of different things, all sorts of unpleasant things, and so disturbing that my mind cannot even concentrate on work for five minutes: and the more I force myself to control my mind, the more I am distracted by various fantasies, sometimes by furious bouts of anger which rise in me depending on my hallucinations. Furthermore, my head begins to fume in no small measure after having a meal and heats up immensely. And for all things I hear I create a human voice in my mind so to say, so that it seems to me very often as if inanimate things were speaking. And during the night I am disturbed by numerous dreams and sometimes my imagination, which starts off to such a degree that I come to believe that I am hearing all sorts of things (if not, that I undoubtedly hear them).

### Salvatore Sciarrino/Carlo Gesualdo - *Le voci soffovetro* (*Voices Behind Glass*)

II. Tu m'uccidi, o crudele,  
D'Amor empia homicida,  
E vuoi ch'io taccia e'l mio morir non grida?  
Ahi, non si può tacer l'aspro martire  
Che va innanzi al morire,  
Ond'io ne vo gridando:  
'Oimè, ch'io moro amando!

II. You are killing me, cruel lady,  
Heartless murderer of love,  
And you expect me to remain silent and not to cry out  
that I am dying?  
No, it is impossible to say nothing of the cruel torment  
Which comes before death  
And which compels me to cry out: "Alas, I die loving!"

IV. Moro, lasso, al mio duolo,  
E chi può darmi vita,  
Ahi, che m'ancide e non vuol darmi aita!

IV. I die, alas, in my suffering,  
And she who could give me life,  
Alas, kills me and will not help me.

O dolorosa sorte,  
Chi dar vita mi può,  
Ahi, mi dà morte.

O sorrowful fate,  
She who could give me life,  
Alas, gives me death.

### Gérard Grisey - *Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil*

#### I. *La Mort de L'ange* - The Death of the Angel (Christian Gabrielle Guez Ricord)

De qui se doit  
de mourir  
comme ange

Of whom owes it to himself  
to die  
like angel

comme il se doit de mourir  
comme un ange  
je me dois  
de mourir  
moi même

like he owed it to himself to die  
like angel  
I owe it to myself  
to die  
myself

il se doit son mourir,  
son ange est de mourir  
comme il s'est mort  
comme un ange

he owes himself his dying,  
his angel is to die  
like he himself died  
like an angel

II. *La Mort de la civilisation - The Death of Civilization* (found on sarcophaguses of the Middle Kingdom of Egypt)

n. 811 et 812: (presque entièrement disparus)	No. 811 and 812 : (almost entirely disappeared)
n. 814: "Alors que tu reposes pour l'éternité..."	No. 814: "While you rest for eternity..."
n. 809: (détruit)	No. 809: (destroyed)
n. 868 et 869: (presque totalement détruits)	No. 868 and 869: (almost totally destroyed)
n. 870: "J'ai parcouru... j'ai été florissant... je fais une déploration... Le lumineux tombe à l'intérieur de..."	No. 870: "I traveled... I have flourished... I lament the death... Luminosity falls inside the..."
n. 961, 963: (détruits)	No. 961, 963: (destroyed)
n. 972: (presque entièrement effacé)	No. 972: (almost entirely erased)
n. 973: "...Qui fait le tour du ciel... jusqu'aux confins du ciel... jusqu'à l'étendue des bras... Fais-moi un chemin de lumière, laisse-moi passer..."	No. 973: "...That circles the sky... to the end of the sky... at arm's reach... Make me a path of light, let me pass..."
n. 903: (détruit)	No. 903: (destroyed)
n. 1050: "Formule pour être un dieu..."	No. 1050: "Formula for being a god..."

III. *La Mort de la voix - The Death of the Voice* (after Erinna)

Dans le vide d'en bas l'écho en vain dérive, Et se tait chez les morts. La voix s'épand dans l'ombre.	In the underworld's emptiness The echo drifts in vain, And is quiet with the dead. The voice spreads into the shadows.
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IV. *La Mort de l'humanité - The Death of Humanity* (from the Epic of Gilgamesh)

...Six jours et sept nuits Bourrasques, Pluies battantes, Ouragans et Déluge Continuèrent de saccager la terre. Le septième jour arrivé, Tempête, Déluge et Hécatombe cessèrent, Après avoir distribué leurs coups au hasard, Comme une femme dans les douleurs, La Mer se calma et s'immobilisa.	Six days and seven nights, Squalls, Driving rains, Hurricanes and Floods Continued to ravage the earth. When the seventh day arrived, Storm, Flood and Slaughter ceased, After having thrown their blows randomly, Like a woman in labor pains, The Sea calmed and came to stillness.
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Je regardai alentour : Le silence régnait ! Tous les hommes étaient Retransformés en argile ; Et la plaine liquide Semblait une terrasse.	I looked around: Silence reigned! All men were Transformed into clay; And the liquid prairie Looked like a terrace.
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(*Berceuse*)

(*Lullaby*)

J'ouvris une fenêtre Et le jour tomba sur ma joue. Je tombai à genoux, immobile. Et je pleurai... Je regardai l'horizon de la mer, le monde...	I opened a window And the light fell on my cheek. I fell to my knees, motionless. And I wept... I looked at the horizon of the sea, at the world...
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## BIOGRAPHIES

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Flutist and lyric soprano **ALICE TEYSSIER** brings "something new, something fresh, but also something uncommonly beautiful" to her performances. Hailed as possessing an "ethereal and riveting" voice with "unusual depth", Alice's mission is to share lesser-known masterpieces and develop a rich and vibrant repertoire that reflects our era.

"An arresting soprano, in all senses", Alice has appeared as a soloist with the San Diego Symphony, International Contemporary Ensemble, Talea Ensemble, the San Francisco New Music Players, Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble, and the Bach Collegium San Diego (amongst others). She is a regular guest to the Monday Evening Concerts series, where she has premiered numerous works - from Rolf Riehm to Cassandra Miller. In 2008, Alice was "haunting" in the United States premiere of Olga Neuwirth's opera 'Lost Highway', after the David Lynch film, at Columbia University's Miller Theater; she has since presented many modern operas by Viktor Ullman, Anthony Davis and Esteban Insinger, amongst others.

This season, she is featured in Gérard Grisey's 'Quatre Chants pour Franchir le Seuil' twice, both with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players and on Monday Evening Concerts. She joins Bach Collegium San Diego for a concert featuring the music of Lully, and the La Jolla Symphony for Stravinsky's 'Persephone'. She will be premiering Ashley Fure's new opera 'The Force of Things' with the International Contemporary Ensemble at Miller Theatre and at the Darmstadt Summer Courses.

Born in Australia of French parents, Alice has lived all around the United States, France and Germany and continues to perform on all continents. She has earned degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, the Conservatoire de Strasbourg, and is currently in the dissertation phase of the Doctorate of Musical Arts at the University of California-San Diego, where she studies with Susan Narucki.

**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. There, he has taken part in the US premieres of major works by Salvatore Sciarrino, György Kurtág, Rolf Riehm, Jo Kondo, Aldo Clementi, Klaus Lang, Ramon Lazkano, Francisco Guerrero, Thomas Meadowcroft and Simon Steen-Andersen. His collaborators on these concerts have included such luminaries as Alexei Lubimov, Natalia Pschenitschnikova, Mario Caroli and Nicholas Isherwood.

Jonathan is a 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 Ensemble Mosaik, Ensemble SurPlus, asamisimasa, hand werk, the Formalist Quartet, PALIMPSEST, the Slee Sinfonietta, 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).

Jonathan has participated in academic 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*. 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). Of particular interest to Jonathan is the relationship of language and music. In Fall of 2015, he joined the faculty of CalArts.

**GIAN MARIA ANNOVI** is Assistant Professor of French and Italian and Gender Studies at the University of Southern California. He is the author of *Altri corpi* (2008), a volume on corporeality and the experimental poetry of the 1960s, and *Pier Paolo Pasolini: Performing Authorship*, which is forthcoming with Columbia University Press. He is the editor of four volumes and the author of numerous book chapters and articles on Italian poetry, the Italian Neo-avant-garde, and Pier Paolo Pasolini. Currently, he is working on a new book project entitled "Late Future: Politics, Materiality, and the End of Futurism." In 2015, he received a Creative Capital | The Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant.

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