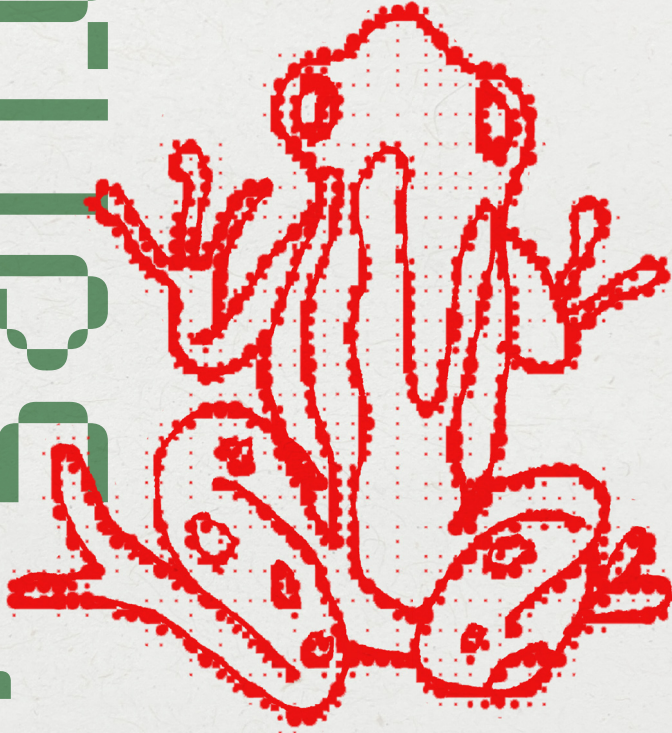




The
OTHERMINDS
2026

Other Minds® presents
with generous support
from the EarthWays
Foundation



David Rothenberg
*Eleven Paths
to Animal Music*

Thursday, April 16,
2026, 7:30 pm
Goldman Theater
at the David Brower
Center, Berkeley, CA

The Nature of Music 20

David Rothenberg

Eleven Paths to Animal Music

How does one play music with animals in a way that respects their nature and agency? Other Minds welcomes musician and philosopher David Rothenberg to answer this question in the West Coast premiere of his work *Eleven Paths to Animal Music* (2025). The remainder of the event will contain shorter pieces—*Murmurology* (2024), *Unconquerable* (2026), and *The Great Cachalot* (2022)—along with a discussion led by Other Minds's Devin King and Rachel Schonfeld about how and why Rothenberg embarked on this more-than-human musical quest.

This concert is the 20th edition of Other Minds's The Nature of Music series, made possible through generous support from the EarthWays Foundation.

A Note from the Executive and Artistic Director

Other Minds began our The Nature of Music series ten years ago this May. Now over twenty events into the series, we've been pleased to feature a multi-generational overview of composers that turn our attention toward the natural world. Among this stimulating group only two others have, like our guest tonight, David Rothenberg, dedicated themselves to a lifetime of interspecies communication in music: Wendy Reid and Jim Nollman.

One question sometimes asked of these composers is whether they are guilty of anthropomorphising—falsely reading human behaviors into animals. In his book *The Man Who Talks to Whales*, Jim thinks through this problem while describing playing guitar with a school of orcas, and eventually comes to what I think is a delightful realization: "What we invented was neither human nor orca. Rather, it was *interspecies* music. A co-created original...The connection was one of feelings and communion, making itself known by an ancient trait of music that transcends intellectual patterns... what the orca and the guitar player had settled upon was the conversational form of dialogue." It's important to remember that, for Jim at least, interspecies music comes to be through dialogue between human and animal.

Where Jim uses the guitar and Wendy the violin, David employs the clarinet. These three interspecies musicians make clear that, even if we may not be able to *talk to the animals*, we might be able to dialogue with them. Key to dialogue is listening, something we need more of in both the natural and human worlds right now. Tonight, as David presents his work, please join me in listening to, and dialoguing with, those *Other* Other Minds, our animal friends.

Charles Amirkhanian

Composer's Notes

ELEVEN PATHS TO ANIMAL MUSIC (2025) West Coast premiere

Based on one section of my 2019 book *Nightingales in Berlin*, *Eleven Paths to Animal Music* is a composition that contains vignettes of natural environments recorded on my travels—from frogs in the Amazon, nightingales and wind in the Camargue, leafcutter ants in Costa Rica, and a lake in Brandenburg, among others. This piece encourages performers to listen closely to whole natural environments and find a way to play together and within them. In addition to the inspiration I take from

the natural world, I also look to Olivier Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*, George Crumb's *Vox Balaenae*, and Tierra Whack's *Whack World*.

MURMUROLOGY (2024) World premiere

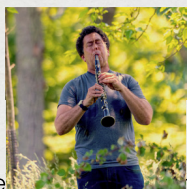
This is a graphic score commissioned by Forecast Journal which, unfortunately, folded before being able to publish the piece. Based on the murmuration graphics of Xavi Bou, and the text-score/Deep Listening approach of Pauline Oliveros.

UNCONQUERABLE (2026) World premiere

This piece was written after my trip to the Amazon in the second half of March 2026 to the Wild Symphony Project at Calanoa Amazonas. It is based on the story of Sydney Possuelo, who ran the FUNAI Agency in Brazil. Tasked with civilizing the indigenous people of the rainforest, he decided instead that if they want to remain at a distance from our culture, they should have the right to do that. That combined with the insights of Alejo Carpentier's great novel *The Lost Steps*, about a classical composer with writer's block who is only able to get inspired while living deep in the jungle. Only problem: no paper, no pens, and no one who has any idea what classical music is or why anyone would want to write it.

THE GREAT CACHALOT (2022)

A section of *Who Knows Why Whales Sing?*, my album released on the occasion of the revised edition of my book on the musicality of whales, entitled *Whale Music* (the 1998 edition was called *Thousand Mile Song*). This duet between bass clarinet and treated sperm whale sounds is worth revisiting in today's world, when there are too many stories about AI being at the verge of decoding the language of these critters. To which Claude says "knowing the structure of a language is very different from knowing its meaning." What if it's all music? Will we ever crack the code of what music means?



David Rothenberg

Musician and philosopher David Rothenberg is the author of *Why Birds Sing*, also published in Italy, Spain, Taiwan, China, Korea, and Germany. In 2006 it was turned into a feature-length TV documentary by the BBC. Rothenberg has also written *Sudden Music*, *Blue Cliff Record*, *Hand's End*, and *Always the Mountains*. His writings have appeared in at least eleven languages. His book *Whale Music*, about making music with whales, came out in February 2023, *Secret Sounds of Ponds* in 2024.

As a musician Rothenberg has performed and recorded with Jan Bang, Scanner, Glen Velez, Suzanne Vega, Peter Gabriel, Ray Phiri, Pauline Oliveros, Benedicte Maurseth, and the Karnataka College of Percussion. His album, *One Dark Night / Left My Silent House*, a duet with pianist Marilyn Crispell, came out on ECM in 2010. *Bug Music*, came out 2013, along with a CD of the same name featuring music made out of encounters with the entomological world. His book, CD, film *Nightingales in Berlin*, was published in 2019. It is also available in German and appeared in French in 2024, where it has been a bestseller. The German audiobook version is read by the acclaimed actress Eva Mattes.

Contd.

His album with Maori musician Rob Thorne *Faultlines* came out in 2021. His latest albums

include *Just Leave It All Behind* and *Lost Steps*. Rothenberg has been profiled on *Radiolab* and in the *New Yorker*. He has more than forty albums out under his own name. In 2024 he received a Grammy Award for *For the Birds*. In 2024, he starred in the film *Eastern Anthems* by acclaimed Montreal director Matthew Wolkow. Recent live performances have included the Philharmonie de Paris, Philharmonie Berlin, House of World Cultures Berlin, Biotopia Senses Festival Munich, BirdLife Slovenia Ljubljana, and a sound installation in 2023 at the Venice Architecture Biennale at the Palazzo Bembo. Earlier museum installations have included the Science Gallery Detroit and the Museum of Natural History in Bergen, Norway.

Working together with a team of scientists Rothenberg has contributed to the detailed decoding of the mockingbird's song. As an interpreter of science he has written feature multimedia stories on cicada music for the *New York Times* and whale music for *National Geographic*, while actively exploring new genres of music from around the world and seeking ever more far-flung musical and scientific collaborators.

Rothenberg is distinguished professor of philosophy and music at the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

UPCOMING OTHER MINDS EVENTS

Thursday, May 14, 2026, 7:00 pm

A LOTTA SONATAS

Music of Lou Harrison (on his birthday), William Bolcom, Joe Hisaishi, Philip Glass, & more

Dennis Russell Davies and Maki Namekawa, piano solo and piano four hands

Littlefield Concert Hall, Mills College at Northeastern University, Oakland

Maverick 250: Tudor / Reinagle

Other Minds celebrates the American semiquincentennial with three summer concerts featuring Maverick American Composers from distinct eras of musical history: live electronics pioneer David Tudor (1926–1996) and the Federalist Era's Alexander Reinagle (1756–1809).

Friday and Saturday, June 26th and 27th 2026, 7:30 pm, with an afternoon workshop on Saturday. **DAVID TUDOR CENTENNIAL** Music of David Tudor by Composers Inside Electronics, Littlefield Concert Hall, Mills College at Northeastern University, Oakland

Monday, July 20, 2026 **ALEXANDER REINAGLE: COMPOSING A NEW NATION** Stephen Siek, piano Littlefield Concert Hall, Mills College at Northeastern University, Oakland

Wednesday, September 9, 2026, 7:30 pm **NATURE OF MUSIC 21: MARINA PETERSON** Goldman Theater at the David Brower Center, Berkeley, CA

SAVE THE DATES OTHER MINDS FESTIVAL 30 Thursday–Sunday, October 8–11, 2026 Brava Theater, San Francisco

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Previous Nature of Music Artists: Cheryl E. Leonard, Raven Chacon, Alvin Curran, Andrew Roth, Martelle V. Jakobsens, Annea Lockwood, Bill Fontana, Michael Pisaro, Joshua Churchill and John Davis, Linda Bouchard with Kyle Bruckmann, Andy Guthrie, Matthew Burner, Jim Nollman, Hildegard Westerkamp, Karen Power, Christopher Luna-Mega, Wendy Reid and Margaret Leng Tan.