



Other Minds® Presents

TERRY RILEY GLORIA CHENG



THE HEAVEN LADDER AND OTHER WORKS FOR PIANO BY TERRY RILEY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2018 @ 7:30PM
YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS FORUM, SAN FRANCISCO

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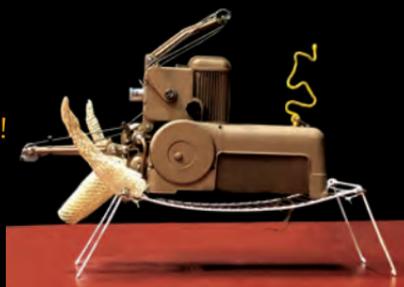
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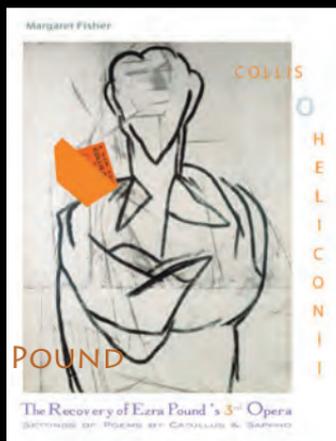


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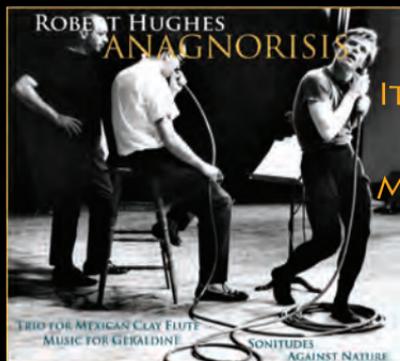
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Welcome to the opening concert of our 25th season. Appropriately we are honoring a great visionary composer, **Terry Riley**, who served on our first Other Minds Board of Directors in 1993 and who exemplifies, in so many ways, the qualities of “otherness” we have long espoused. Riley has forged an inspiring career, combining his interest in classical rigor, jazz improvisation, and the spirituality of Indian classical music, to fashion music that is universally hailed. Now, at 83, he is actively giving concerts around the globe, and tonight’s collaboration with the exceptional classical pianist **Gloria Cheng** of Los Angeles, represents yet another view of his keyboard work. Our thanks to Terry and Gloria for this collaborative appearance.



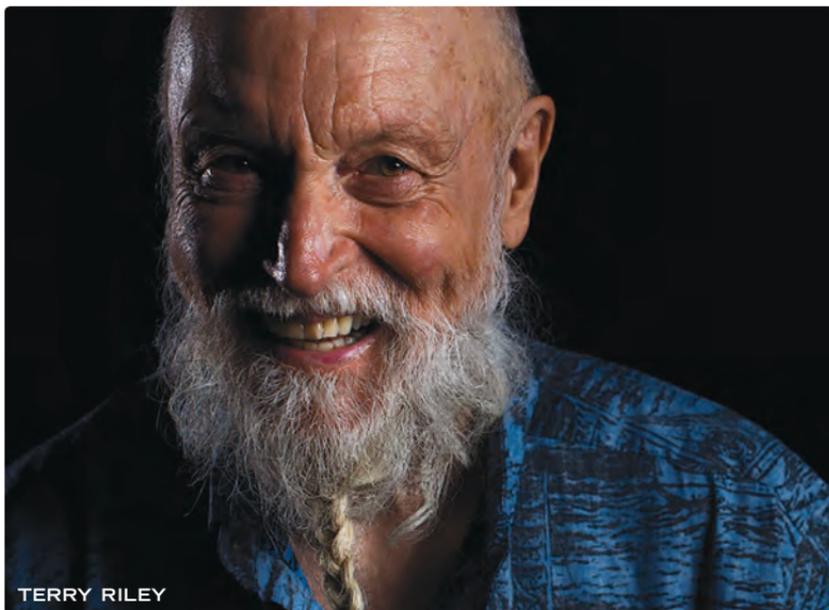
Visionaries is a theme of this year’s Other Minds season. We’ll bring you the first American performances of music by the little-known quarter-tone composer **Ivan Wyschnegradsky** (1893-1979) with the **Arditti Quartet** playing his complete music for string quartet (March 23), and his works for one, two and four pianos in quarter-tones (June 16). We’ll have the world premiere of *The Pressure* by **Brian Baumbusch** (for a newly-invented 22-player gamelan), commissioned by Other Minds with support from the Gerbode Foundation. And we’ll have **Maki Namekawa** and **Dennis Russell Davies** playing two piano arrangements by Shostakovich of his own Symphony No. 4 and Stravinsky’s *Symphony of Psalms* (February 10).

Meanwhile, we continue our concert series The Nature of Music, highlighting composers who employ environmental sounds; our new series Latitudes featuring experimental composers who inhabit the liminal space between avant-garde classical and rock music; our weekly radio program on KALW of recent releases and historical treasures; and our ever-expanding preservation projects on otherminds.org and radiOM.org.

For full information on all our presentations please visit otherminds.org, newly redesigned, where you also can see videos of past events.

Thank you for your confidence in Other Minds and your generous support. We love sharing our vision through visionaries, among whom we count you for your loyalty over so many years.

Charles Amirkhanian
Executive & Artistic Director



TERRY RILEY



GLORIA CHENG

lefterisphoto

TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

Two Pieces for Piano (1958/1959)

No. 1

No. 2

The Walrus in Memoriam (1991, rev. 1993)

The Heaven Ladder, Book 7 (1994)

Misha's Bear Dance

Venus in '94

Ragtempus Fugatis

Fandango on the Heaven Ladder

Simone's Lullaby

Gloria Cheng, piano

INTERMISSION

Simply M... (2007)

Requiem for Wally (1997)

Terry Riley, piano

Cheng Tiger Growl Roar (2018)

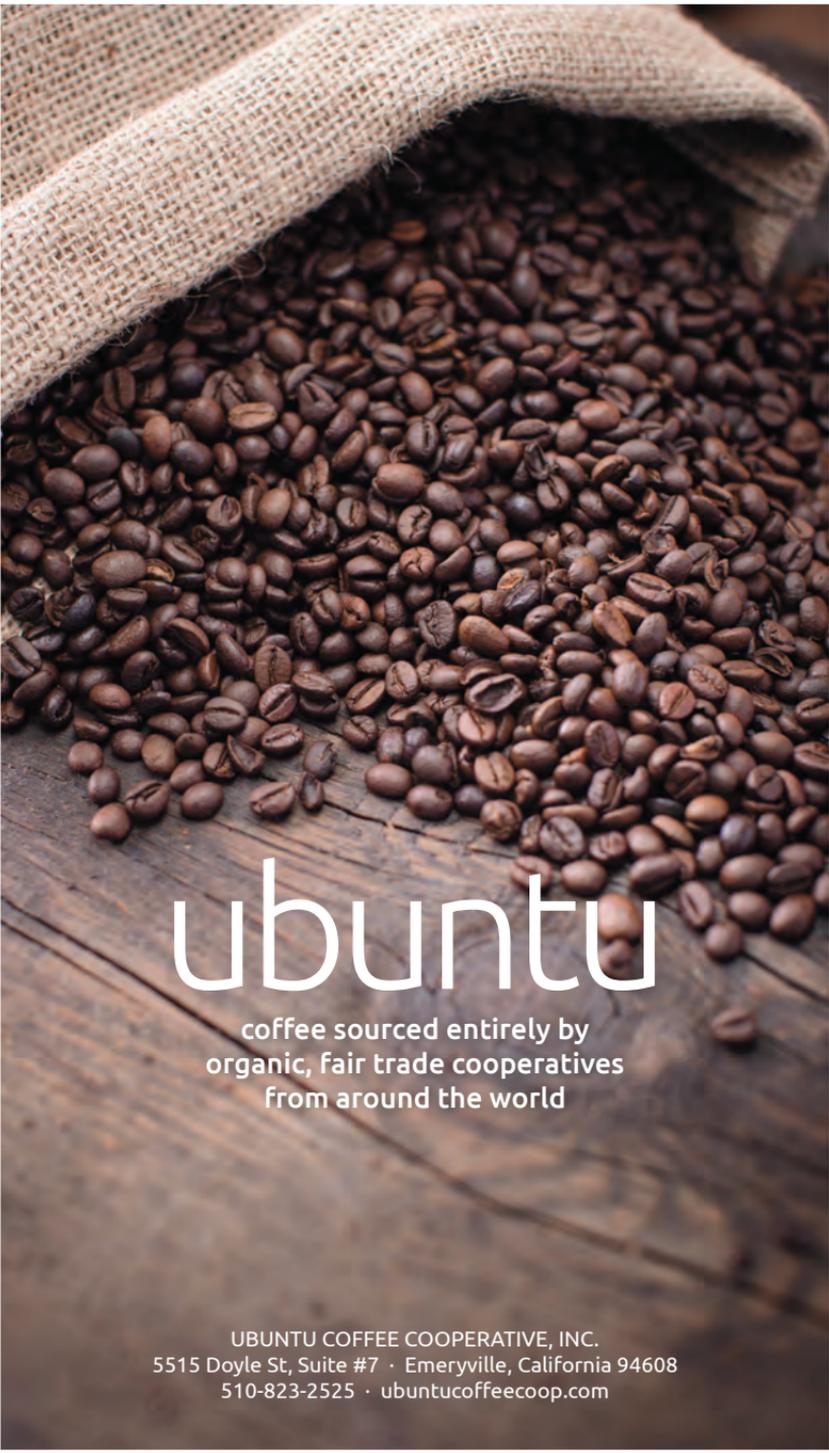
Growl

Cheng

Tiger

Roar

Gloria Cheng and Terry Riley,
piano four hands



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Maki Namekawa and Dennis Russell Davies**Two-piano works of Shostakovich and Stravinsky**

Sunday, February 10, 2019, 4pm @ Taube Atrium Theater

There are many examples of major symphonies having complicated premieres but none are more intriguing than the purgatory to which Dmitri Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony was sentenced back in 1936. To say his work, when the composer was 30 years old, met with official disapproval is an understatement. The stage was set with the grand success that Shostakovich experienced in 1934 with his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. The work was a proven success until it was denounced by Stalin himself in early 1936. It is generally accepted nowadays that the fear that was implanted in Shostakovich during this episode was the principle reason for the withdrawal of his Fourth Symphony. This kind of grotesquely choreographed dance with the authorities throughout Shostakovich's life really began with the Pravda condemnation of *Lady Macbeth* and the charade around the premiere of the Fourth Symphony.

Other Minds Festival 24: Concert 1**Arditti Quartet Plays Wyschnegradsky**

Saturday, March 23, 2019, 8pm @ Taube Atrium Theater

Single-minded and visionary composers are so often the ones most easily ignored by the changing currents of music taste. Ivan Wyschnegradsky (1893-1979) led a life characterized by exile and cultural exclusion; he was never part of any school, and the individuality of his work reflects his personal and lifelong determination to honor his deeply idiosyncratic muse. The Arditti String Quartet of London, champions of Wyschnegradsky's work, will perform his microtonal pieces for strings. While string music comprises a smaller portion of Wyschnegradsky's catalogue than his better-known works for microtonal pianos, the Arditti Quartet makes a compelling case for Wyschnegradsky's quartets, exploiting the expressive capabilities inherent to strings. The expanded scalar and harmonic palette, and wider variety of timbres lead the way to reforming a repertoire long confined to 12 equal-tempered tones.

Other Minds Festival 24: Concert 2**Brian Baumbusch: The Pressure, Lightbulb Ensemble & Friction Quartet**

Friday, June 15, 2019, 7:30pm, at YBCA Theater

Other Minds Festival 24: Concert 3**Wyschnegradsky: Music for Four Pianos in Quarter-Tones**

Saturday, June 16, 2019, 7:30pm, at YBCA Theater

For further details, visit otherminds.org.

The idea for tonight's concert was hatched in January 2017 when I met up with Terry at one of his four appearances at Los Angeles' Geffen Contemporary gallery. His twin grandchildren, Simone and Misha, were with him, and I was delighted to meet them.

Until then I had only known of them as the newborns who inspired the eponymous first and final movements of *The Heaven Ladder, Book VII*, Terry's five-movement pianistic tour-de-force completed in 1994. The piece had been commissioned through Meet the Composer by Kathleen Supové, Stephen Drury, Charles Wells, and me. Kathleen premiered the piece in NYC, and I gave its West coast premiere and recorded it for Telarc shortly afterwards. During our brief conversation at the Geffen, Terry and I agreed that it was time for me to perform the suite in full again—and why not do so in a concert that we'd play together?

In his youth Terry pursued training as a classical pianist, citing the renowned Bay Area-based Adolph Baller as one of his teachers. (As a student at Stanford some years later, I also studied with Baller.) An online recording of Terry's U.C. Berkeley Masters degree performance of his Two Piano Pieces (1958/1959) reveals him as a stunning virtuoso virtually destined to perform and compose extensively for the piano. Yet 35 years would pass before he composed his next fully notated piano piece, *The Heaven Ladder, Book VII*.

The original 1994 score contains few performance indications. The title page bears the instruction: "Dynamics and phrasing should be worked out by the performer or in collaboration with the composer." I did both. After working out my "edition" of the piece, I drove north to the Gold Rush town of Camptonville, the home of Terry and Ann Riley, to sit and consult at the piano with Terry.

Almost from the start, Terry and I found ourselves to be in profound disagreement. Where I aimed for lyricism, he heard preciousness; where he advised less *rubato* and more drive, I felt the results to be unmusical. In the end, we both conceded here and there, and all worked out. Now, when I revisit my recording of 23 years ago, I hear things that I would, and indeed do, play very differently now. One of the joys of preparing these pieces after a long hiatus was the opportunity to compare notes (sometimes literally) and musical decisions with my friend Sarah Cahill, whose long and fruitful association with Terry is well known. Terry's piano works, and the pianists who play it, as of yet lack a long and varied interpretive tradition to draw upon. We are bonding with each other to create it.

WHEN PLAYING THE MUSIC OF COMPOSER-PIANISTS, IT'S POSSIBLE TO SENSE THE ANATOMY OF THEIR HANDS, THEIR INNATE PHYSICAL APPROACH TO THE KEYBOARD, THEIR IDIOSYNCRATIC TOUCH, EVEN THEIR COMPORTMENT AT THE INSTRUMENT.



photo by Nick Volpert

When playing the music of composer-pianists, it's possible to sense the anatomy of their hands, their innate physical approach to the keyboard, their idiosyncratic touch, even their comportment at the instrument. All of this finds its way into the shapes of their chords, passagework, and other characteristics, making the piano music of composer-pianists behave and most assuredly *feel*, to other pianists, like a pianist wrote it. Terry's music feels challenging under my fingers, but it is serious fun to channel his persona at the keyboard.

For me, playing works by composer-pianists also invites an excursion into their personal piano-playing histories. Terry's primary relationship with the piano is that of an improviser – an extraordinary one as you will hear. Expressing a lifetime of knowledge and experience from his studies of classical, jazz, contemporary, North African, and Indian classical music, his playing defies stylistic boundaries. Terry once said: "A lot of intersections between these musics occur in my mind. As I'm writing or playing something like a *raga*, suddenly a kind of ragtime motive might come into it." His composed music for piano, much of which emerges from his improvisations, does much the same thing, often switching multiple times within the same piece or movement. With his own virtuosic command of the piano at the service of his global, kaleidoscopic, consciousness-expanding imagination, the music you will hear tonight will no doubt be a wonder. I look forward to the next two hours as much as you do.

— Gloria Cheng

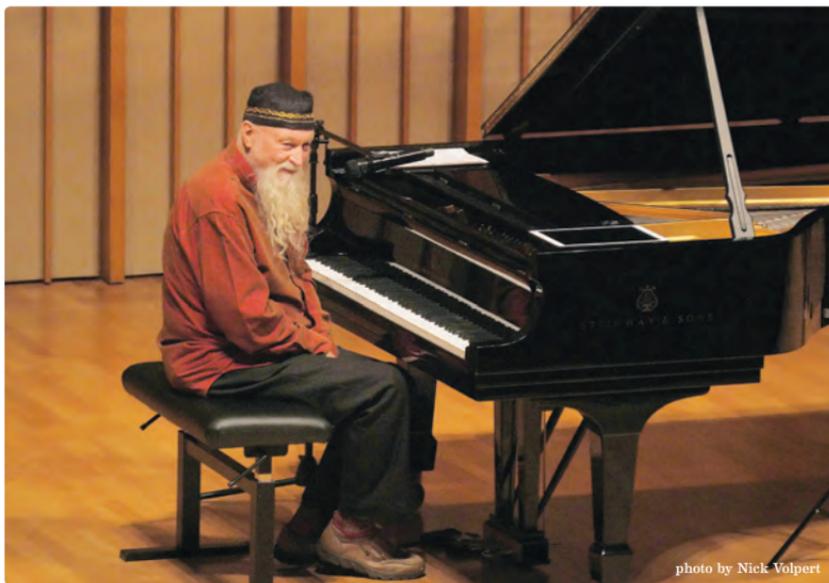
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PROGRAM NOTES

I *t is no wonder that the piano* has obsessed composers and symphonists, alike with its allure and power. The piano, lacking the nuance of say, a cello, to explore the areas in “between the notes,” more than makes up for this limitation with its enormous scope of range, dynamics and shading.

As a composer who has had an intimate relationship to the piano for seven decades, I find my musical thinking closely connected to what my hands, mind and heart attempt to draw out of the keyboard. The piano, spanning a range of over seven octaves, most closely approximates the scope of the symphony orchestra and its capacity to express melodic, harmonic and percussive elements. To an unparalleled degree, it is not only a supreme performance instrument but a multicolored palette on which to compose. There is a long-standing tradition in the Western world of the composer/pianist. We know that Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Brahms, Debussy, and Bartok were not only great pianists but marvelous improvisers. We can surmise that many of the great works of chamber and orchestral music had in their origins the process of composers “playing around” with ideas at the piano. This process was often taken into the concert hall and so you would encounter a great pianist like Beethoven continuing the process of extemporization even during the premiere of his piano concertos. What this means is that the attitude of being in the moment does not stop once the music is written down. If one is really listening to what one is playing, there will be moments of opening up where a particular musical passage will take on a new meaning and character. A passage on the written page that consists of just a few measures can be expanded into a much



larger thought when one's listening muse takes over. Music must be a living art that is born anew in each moment just as all other life unravels. In order for this to happen the musician must be equipped with certain tools. These techniques can take a lifetime to develop. Once developed, these processes transcend technique and serve to render the elements of harmony, melody, counterpoint and rhythm into a spontaneous, comprehensive satisfying thought.

The area that interests me most is where the conscious mind is subsumed into the universal mind. This is why I find the solo piano experience so important. It is an opportunity to compose spontaneously in real time, passages that would be extremely challenging to render into notation. What I am attempting to do here is recreate a music structure from a set of plans. This can be either

THE PIANO, SPANNING A RANGE OF OVER SEVEN OCTAVES, MOST CLOSELY APPROXIMATES THE SCOPE OF THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND ITS CAPACITY TO EXPRESS MELODIC, HARMONIC AND PERCUSSIVE ELEMENTS.

a written down score or a plan totally committed to memory. This set of plans that can be the reference for setting in motion a unique musical journey whether it happens in performance or in our daily practice.

The **Two Pieces for Piano** (1958/1959) were begun while I was working at United Airlines, writing music on my off time. Also I had just gotten married and we had a daughter on the way. I had begun to play lots of Schoenberg and some intricate Schoenberg-like pieces by composer Loren Rush. I had begun to transition from my

Neoclassical period under the spell of Francis Poulenc and Darius Milhaud. The discovery of Schoenberg excited me both as a piano player and composer. I absorbed the rhythmic, textural and melodic angularity of the style without the desire to apply twelve-tone technique to my writing. They were written at the piano a phrase at a time, which I played over and over, modifying the rhythms and pitches until it felt and sounded "right."

The Walrus in Memoriam (1991, rev. 1993) was commissioned by EMI Records for a series of recordings made by Aki Takahashi of piano works composed by various artists based on tunes written by the Beatles. This work deals somewhat freely with sections from *I Am the Walrus*, stating its main themes in a kind of ragtime setting interspersed and ending with more spacious dreamlike episodes intended to be the memorial for John Lennon.

The Heaven Ladder, Book 7 (1994). These five pieces were written in 1994 and are the first entirely-written-out piano works since my *Two Pieces for Piano* (1958/1959). This may seem a bit strange since my instrument is the piano, but the other works I have composed over the years, and have performed in solo piano concerts, have no scores and involve a great deal of improvisation.



I originally intended to write a large single movement work, but as I began exploring what was inside my present musical universe, these five pieces popped out. My concerns here were to do things that could be best expressed with the equal tempered tuning of the piano. I was unconcerned with style but very concerned with content and the desire to make these pieces bathe fully in the kind of sensuality each one is characterized by.

I surprised myself by writing “Ragtempus Fugatis,” for when I began, I had no intention of carrying the fugal aspects of the piece so far, but it seemed to want to write itself that way, using all the traditional fugal tools, such as retrograde, inversion, *strettos* and so forth. To thicken the plot there are some original ragtime episodes to interact with the subject and propelling minimalist interludes. This work is dedicated to my old friend and Ragtime mentor, Wally Rose.

It is no secret that I am wild about the music of Spain and Latin America and since I heard my first fandango I’ve been wanting to write one. Here I am attempting to alternate and fuse the controlled sensuality of the romantic fandango with a somewhat melancholic chorale.

“Venus in ‘94” is a waltz-scherzo with a somewhat edgy quality to its romanticism. Its beauty comes with a price-tag of a quite hazardous course, requiring the pianist to execute wide but delicate leaps through its intricate voicings and rhythms. A tip of the hat to early Schoenberg, Chopin, and Brazil.

During the writing of *The Heaven Ladder* my daughter Colleen, presented my wife, Ann, and I with twin grandchildren, Misha and Simone. The inspiration for the opening and closing movements, “Misha’s Bear Dance,” at 90 measures is about the closest thing I have written to a miniature and is marked by high energy and shifting poly-meters. “Simone’s Lullaby,” whose three themes are first introduced in the “Fandango” are set here in an entirely different character. They combine and recombine in a set of variations over its 64 measures. It is marked pianissimo throughout and can be repeated ad libitum.

Simply M... (2007) was written in memory of Dr. Margaret Lyon who was the chairman of the Mills College (Oakland, California) music department for 45 years. A remarkable woman and close friend. She brought, among others, Darius Milhaud, Luciano Berio, and myself to the college to teach composition.

Simply M... is comprised of a ballad in A flat Major which moves through the keys of A flat minor and B flat minor before settling into long sections based on a left hand E flat ostinatos in 11 beats and 18 beats.

Requiem for Wally (1997) was written in memory of my ragtime piano mentor, Wally Rose, one of the great masters of the ragtime style. This work combines elements of Ragtime with sections built on the Raga Nat Bhairav. Much of the ragtime pattern in *Requiem for Wally* is in 7/4 instead of the tradition 4/4 meter. *Requiem for Wally* is also in multiple sections played without pause and sometimes recycled in variation technique

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In similar fashion to *I Like Your Eyes, Liberty* (2003-2004, in collaboration with the poet Michael McClure), the irregularly arpeggiated patterns of the Nath Bhairav section when harmonized as they are

here, are somewhat reminiscent of the harmonic flavor of late Beethoven but heard in a unusual context.

Cheng Tiger Growl Roar (2018). Since Gloria Cheng and I are both playing solo piano on this concert we thought it would be fun to have some new music we could play together. I came up with this suite of four pieces each bearing titles derived from the initials of our names. The energies of the music both do and don’t have relationship to the titles but the titles are what jump started the process.

— Terry Riley

BIOGRAPHIES

Composer/pianist/vocalist **Terry Riley** is widely considered to be the father of Minimalism with his landmark 1964 composition, *In C*, establishing Minimalism as a vital force in contemporary music. His work continues to be a major influence today. Riley's recordings, *A Rainbow in Curved Air* and *Poppy Nogood and the Phantom Band*, made a huge impact on the classical, jazz, rock and electronic scenes when they were released by CBS in the late 1960's. His solo all-night concerts set the stage for the raves that would follow decades later, and his early experiments with tape loops, tape delays and the creation of the Time Lag Accumulator anticipated today's looping and sampling movement.



Riley's career, spanning six decades, has always crossed boundaries and been marked by effortless transformations from one strata of thought to another. Highly developed elements of Indian music, jazz, African and Middle Eastern music can be heard in an intricate melding in much of his work.

As a senior disciple of the late legendary North Indian vocalist, Pandit Pran Nath, Riley appeared in numerous concerts worldwide as the Master's accompanist both on tabla and vocals from 1970 until Pran Nath's death in 1996. He has received numerous awards, including grants from the NEA, John Simon Guggenheim, and Fromm foundations, among others. He has written in almost every genre: for chamber, orchestral, jazz, rock, and world music ensembles. Most notable is his 37-year association with the Kronos Quartet. Among the most recent of the over 25 major works that Riley has written for Kronos are *The Cusp of Magic* for string quartet and pipa, and *Sol/Tierra/Luna*, a concerto for two guitars, violin, and orchestra.

Riley's list of collaborators includes La Monte Young, Chet Baker, John Cale, Don Cherry, Krishna Bhatt, Gyan Riley, Stefano Scodanibbio, the Bang on a Can All Stars, artist Bruce Conner, and poet Michael McClure. Riley studied piano with Duane Hampton, Adolf Baller and Wally Rose, and composition with Robert Erickson. He taught composition and Raga at Mills College in Oakland from 1971-1981.

The London Times listed Riley as one of the "1000 makers of the 20th century."

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. She has commissioned, premiered, and been the dedicatee of countless works by a distinguished, international roster of composers.

Winner of the Grammy for Best Instrumental Soloist Performance [without Orchestra] for her 2008 recording, *Piano Music of Esa-Pekka Salonen, Steven Stucky, and Witold Lutosławski*, Cheng received a second Grammy nomination for her next recording, *The Edge of Light Messiaen/Saariaho*. In 2016 Cheng launched *MONTAGE: Great Film Composers and the Piano*, a themed recital, CD, and award-winning documentary (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 on two PBS SoCal stations during the spring of 2017.



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. At Pierre Boulez's personal invitation, Cheng joined him to perform Olivier Messiaen's *Oiseaux exotiques* in 2003 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic during its historic final concerts in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Cheng's concerto debut with the L.A. Philharmonic was in 1998 under the direction of Zubin Mehta.

Recent seasons have seen Cheng and pianist/composer Thomas Adès join together to premiere 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*. 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 Kaija Saariaho and Jean-Baptiste Barrière; and *Inside the (G)Earbox*, a daylong symposium at UCLA marking the 70th birthday of composer John Adams.

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 and programs that unite performers, composers, and scholars. She is often invited to speak as an advocate for contemporary music, and in 2012 served as Regent's Lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley.



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ABOUT OTHER MINDS

Other Minds is dedicated to the encouragement and propagation of contemporary music in all its forms through concerts, recordings, broadcasts, audio preservation, and public discussions that bring together artists and audiences of diverse traditions, generations, and cultural backgrounds. By fostering cross-cultural exchange and creative dialogue, and by encouraging exploration of areas in new music seldom touched upon by mainstream music institutions, Other Minds is committed to expanding and reshaping the definition of what constitutes “serious music.”

Founded in 1993, Other Minds in San Francisco is a leading organization for new and experimental music, devoted to championing the most original, eccentric, and underrepresented creative voices in contemporary music, with an emphasis on composers of the American Experimental Tradition. From festival concerts, film screenings, radio broadcasts, and the commissioning of new works, to producing and releasing CDs, preserving thousands of interviews and concerts and distributing them free on the Internet, Other Minds has become one of the world’s major conservators of new music’s ecology.

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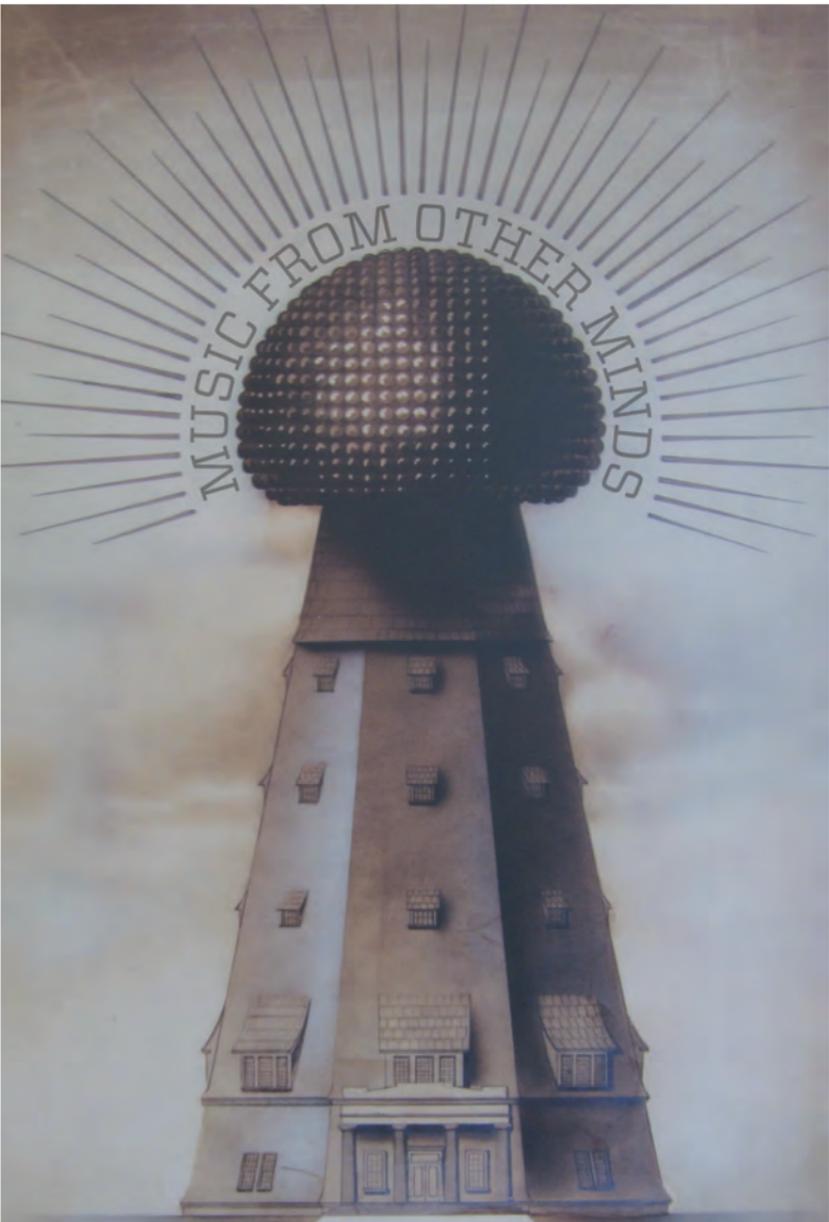
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Other Minds salutes the administration and staff of the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts for their work on tonight’s event. We urge you to join the YBCA and obtain discounts on all concerts, including our OM 24 Festival in June.



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