

Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite* and other music for piano four-hands with computer visualizations by

Cori O'Lan



Saturday, March 5, 2022 @ 7pm Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley

# ECO ENSEMBLE & THE BERKELEY NEW MUSIC PROJECT

5.9.22 / 8pm / Hertz Hall

The eco ensemble is a group of experienced, highly-skilled Bay Area musicians dedicated to performing new music from established and emerging composers. Its mission is to enrich and serve the Bay Area's cultural life through the creation, performance and dissemination of new music by composers from Berkeley and around the world.

We are both influenced by — and exert influence on — the artistic ecology within which we exist. The name Eco acknowledges this ecology and locates our work as part of the Bay Area's abundant cultural community.

THE ECO ENSEMBLE IS IN PERMANENT RESIDENCE AT UC BERKELEY'S CENTER FOR NEW MUSIC AND AUDIO TECHNOLOGIES AND DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

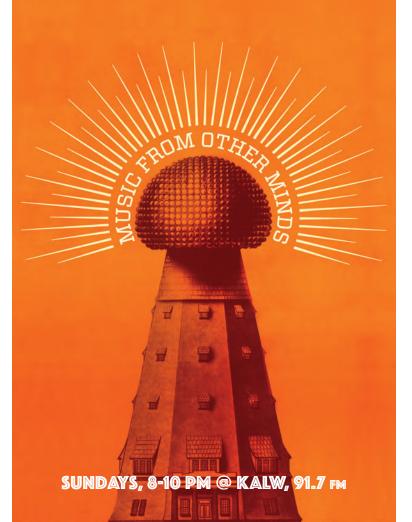


Berkeley Music



## FREE YOUR EARS YOUR MIND WILL FOLLOW

~ GEORGE CLINTON (MIS-QUOTED)







## From the Artistic Director

Charles Amirkhanian

ne of the few bright spots during our two-year hiatus from live concertizing has been the worldwide emergence of streaming performances. Truth to tell, not all have been stellar, but among the most inventive in classical music were collaborations by pianists Dennis Russell Davies & Maki Namekawa, with interactive "visualizations" by Cori O'Lan. Their events were transmitted live from the forward-facing Ars Electronica Museum in Linz, Austria, in an aptly-titled series, "Home Delivery."

Tonight Other Minds is proud to bring this dynamic trio of artists to the Bay Area. Our audience already has enjoyed the talents of Namekawa and Davies on several occasions, but this is our first production with the inimitable Cori O'Lan (aka Gerfried Stocker).

O'Lan's realtime animations are something to behold. By analyzing the frequency spectrum (pitch), rhythm, and dynamics of the music using a high-powered computer software, he is able to isolate parts of the sonic identity of the piano's sound and animate them—with almost no latency—into colorful dancing silhouettes and fractals. Part artistic agency and part literal translation of sound, Stocker produces a synesthetic experience akin to only the wildest dreams of Alexander Scriabin, Ivan Wyschnegradsky, and other early progenitors of audio-visual performance.

Gerfried Stocker is the CEO / Artistic Director of Ars Electronica in Linz, Austria, perhaps one of the most advanced digital fine arts establishments in the world.

As an artist, Stocker works under the amusing pseudonym Cori O'Lan, a reference, via Beethoven, to a Roman warrior Gnaeus Marcius Coriolanus, who successfully defended Rome by defeating an enemy army at Corioli. He then received the Roman Senate's nomination to become Consul but failed to win the people's vote and subsequently joined forces with the enemy he had defeated. The tale, dating to five centuries before the birth of Christ and documented in Plutarch's Parallel Lives, became the subject of one of Shakespeare's last two tragedies.

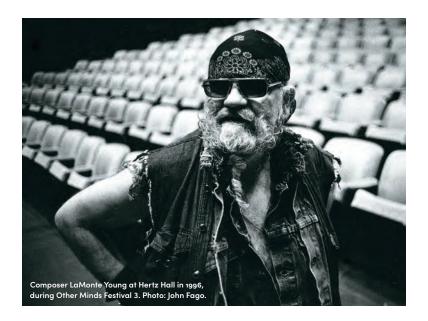
Tragedy hardly describes the career path of Mr. Stocker. He has fought gallantly for art incorporating the latest technological advances. A visit to the website of the Ars Electronica Center [ars.electronica. art] will confirm his success in establishing Linz as a fulcrum point for new developments in the digital arts. And, as Cori O'Lan, his sizzling creations feature dancing acrobatic lines and contortionist abstractions, projected above the pianists in sync with the music of Stravinsky, Laurie Anderson, Philip Glass, and others less well-known.

Among those will be the the 86-year-old Austrian Kurt Schwertsik, whom Davies met when he was conductor of the Stuttgart Opera in 1985. "Kurt and I are very close friends now, and, like Charles Ives, most of his life he held a day job." Schwertsik was a horn player in the Vienna Symphony for decades but also studied composition with Karlheinz Stockhausen, was a co-founder of the Ensemble "die reihe," and has composed over 100 works, including 9 concerti, one of them for alphorn. Davies notes, "I'm really drawn toward his music. He writes as if the twelve-tone movement never happened. And also as if minimalism never happened either. His music is tonal but with a pungency that is very sophisticated. It's challenging to play and rewarding to hear. You could call him a Progressive Tonalist."

The featured item on our concert will be the American premiere of Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite*, arranged for piano four-hands by Davies. "Many listeners have commented that hearing Stravinsky's piano four-hand version of *The Rite of Spring* helped them appreciate even more the compositional values of the work without the distraction, of his ingenious orchestration," says Davies. "I hope sincerely that this new four-hand version of *The Firebird* can achieve something similar."

#### Some thoughts on Hertz Hall

Our venue tonight, Hertz Memorial Hall, was built in 1958 and is named for Alfred Hertz (1872-1942), conductor of the San Francisco Symphony (1915-1930) who left his estate to Berkeley for music. With its remarkably fine acoustics for classical music, it now has provided over 60 years of fond memories for performers and concert-goers alike. Throughout the 1960s it was the site of live concert broadcasts every Wednesday over KPFA Radio over a special high-quality phone line for the pur-



pose. "The UC Noon Concert" featured performances of classical music by students and faculty, with live announcing by broadcast staff, all transmitted in living monaural.

As all concerts held on campus are sponsored by university organizations, it's a special privilege for Other Minds to be welcomed to this historic campus from time to time.

The first-ever Other Minds concert took place here on this stage, with internationally-renowned composer György Ligeti. He spoke about the first two books of his rhythmically complex Etudes for Piano, given its U.S. premiere at that event by Volker Banfield. The date was January 29, 1993.

In November 1996 during Other Minds Festival 3, one of our two concerts held here was quite a marathon. Composer La Monte Young was present for a playing of his extremely difficult, hour-plus-long string quartet in just intonation performed by Kronos—a touching and vindicating occasion for him since he'd studied in the Music Department here where he had become, more or less, persona non grata.

Several halls including Hertz were employed on November 2-4, 2012, when Other Minds presented a centennial in-depth exploration of the music of Conlon Nancarrow. Gathered together was an all-star cast that included pianolist Rex Lawson, instrument inventor Trimpin, composers Peter Garland, Dominic Murcott, and Kyle Gann. Felix Meyer of the Sacher Foundation in Basel that houses Nancarrow's archive, and archaeologist Yoko Sugiura-Nancarrow, the composer's widow,



and son Mako Nancarrow also were participants. The event was the first-ever sponsored jointly by Cal Performances, the UC Museum of Art, the Pacific Film Archive, and the UC Department of Music, and the occasion was an unalloyed success.

My own first production here dates to November 20, 1970, when I organized a concert of music by the then-forgotten American composer George Antheil (1900–1959). With the assistance of Robert Hughes, I assembled an all-star cast of Bay Area performers to revive Antheil's obsessively repetitive chamber music composed in the mid-1920s, but still unpublished. The scores had been languishing in the closet of the composer's widow in North Hollywood for over 40 years until their re-emergence that evening. A capacity audience gave a thunderous standing ovation to performers Miriam & Bernard Abramowitsch, Nathan Rubin, Vladimir Pleshakov, Lou Harrison, and Gerhard Samuel, among others, and the joy and amazement on the faces of widow Böski and son Peter Antheil was gratifying to see. That concert launched a major revival of Antheil's music that continues to this day. The event was sponsored by KPFA in collaboration with C.A.L., the Committee for Arts and Lectures, a predecessor to Cal Performances.

So it is with gratitude that we find ourselves once again in this historic venue with our old friends, Dennis and Maki, and our new one, Cori O'Lan.

### o FRIDAY NOVEMBER 20, 1970 8:30 PM o

HERTZ HALL u.c. campus

JEORGE ANTHEIL 1900-1959



Times Wide World

KPFA & C.A.L. PRESENT A CONCERT OF UNPUBLISHED MUSIC BY

NOT FOR FLYING—The 26-year-old George Antheil is shown in a 1927 photo looking at an airplane propeller and other noisemakers used in the New York première of his "Ballet Mécanique."

THE LATE AMERICAN COMPOSER-AUTHOR

In November 1970, KPFA and Charles Amirkhanian presented the early works of George Antheil to a sold-out Hertz Hall on the U. C. Berkeley campus. This historic concert launched a revival of interest in Antheil's early music which had not been performed since the mid-Twenties.



## Tonight's Program

#### Maki Namekawa & Dennis Russell Davies

The Firebird Suite and other works for piano with computer visualizations by Cori O'Lan Sat., March 5, 7pm @ Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley

This concert was made possible through the generosity of Tricia Bell & Clive McCarthy and a grant from the Ross McKee Foundation.



#### **Kurt Schwertsik**

#### Six Macbeth Pieces, "I'll Charm the Air to Give a Sound," Op. 71 (1994)

- 1 Enter Three Witches
- 2 Something Wicked This Way Comes
- 3 All the Perfumes of Arabia Will Not Sweeten This Little Hand
- 4 Fire Burn and Cauldron Bubble
- 5 Till Birnam Forest Come to Dunsinane
- 6 The Wood Began to Move

West Coast Premiere

Maki Namekawa & Dennis Russell Davies, piano four-hands

#### Hania Rani

Hawaii Oslo; Glass (2018)

Maki Namekawa, solo

#### **Igor Stravinsky**

### The Firebird Suite, arranged for piano four-hands by Dennis Russell Davies

American Premiere

Maki Namekawa & Dennis Russell Davies, piano four-hands

#### INTERMISSION

#### **Laurie Anderson**

Song for Bob (2017)

Dennis Russell Davies, solo

#### Philip Glass

#### Elergy for the Present (2020)

American Premiere

Dennis Russell Davies, solo

#### Philip Glass

Passacaglia, "Distant Figure" (2017)

Maki Namekawa, solo

#### Marc Reibel

Sakura II, Variations on a Japanese Folk Song, "Cherry Blossom" (2019)

American Premiere

Maki Namekawa & Dennis Russell Davies, piano four-hands





## Notes on the Music

onight's program begins with the West Coast premiere of Austrian composer Kurt Schwertsik's (b. 1935) incidental music for two pianos from a stage production of Macbeth. Schwertsik stated in 2015, "My first collaboration with the Dance Theatre of Johann Kresnik was Macbeth. Kresnik is a master in creating scenes of shocking intensity. I tried my best to match his impact, but despite all the blood & entrails poured into the orchestral pit around the lone piano–according to Gottfried Helnweins' stage design–my two pianists looked like time travelers out of the 19th century. Yet the combination of

stage & music worked miraculously well. Not wanting to lose the music entirely, I formed a little suite, choosing appropriate quotations out of Shakespeare's play as titles to compensate for the lack of scenery."

Kurt Schwertsik served for decades as a horn player in the Vienna Symphony and co-founded the Ensemble "die reihe," with Friedrich Cerha. Following his training with



composer Joseph Marx, he studied and collaborated closely with the more radical Karlheinz Stockhausen. Described by his close friend Davies as a Progressive Tonalist, the prolific Schwertsik has composed over 100 works but eschewed twelve-tone composition as well as minimalism. At 86, he's recently completed a new orchestral work for Davies to be premiered in the coming year.

What follows is two short solo pieces by Polish composer/pianist **Hania Rani** (b. 1990): *Hawaii Oslo* and *Glass*. Rani splits her time between

Warsaw and Berlin. She is a prolific composer of piano music, usually performed by herself. "Hawaii Oslo comes from her debut album Esja which she recorded "pre-pandemically" in her Warsaw apartment. The album release stated that "Hawaii Oslo takes its name from the film of the same name but is inspired by the contrast of mood and location, always changing as you listen. The piece Glass is named for its fragility, but also for its many colors, like glass caught in the light."

The first half concludes with Dennis Russell Davies' own arrangement of **Igor Stravinsky's** *The Firebird Suite* arranged for four-hands. Davies notes from his 2016 recording on which he and Namekawa recorded the four-hand version in connection with Davies's orchestral recording with the Sinfonieorchester Basel, "The successful performances of Stravinsky's four-hand version of *The Rite of Spring* with my wife Maki Namekawa, and the favorable reception of our recording, led me to the decision to take on an arrangement for four hands of *The Firebird* ballet from 1910.

"Unlike *The Rite of Spring* and *Petrushka*, Stravinsky's own piano version of *The Firebird* is for solo piano, most certainly for his own use as composer, and for the dance rehearsal pianists to use as an aid for the choreographers and dancers. In its published form it is essentially unplayable (at least for me!) but was a tremendous help as I prepared my four-hand version in that I could clearly see which elements of this highly complex score were essential for him in his piano version, and I made sure to always include them in mine."

We'll begin the second half of the program with Laurie Anderson's Song for Bob which was composed to honor the former long-



time president of Nonesuch Records Bob Hurwitz. Under his leadership, Nonesuch was committed to recording new music by some of the most prominent composers of the 20th century from Elliott Carter and Henryk Górecki to John Adams, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass. Upon his retirement in 2017, several performers and composers descended on the Brooklyn Academy of Music

to celebrate. Included on that program was Laurie Anderson's *Song for Bob* which the Namekawa-Davies duo took up shortly thereafter.

**Philip Glass'** Passacaglia for Solo Piano, *Distant Figure* is a palimpsest. It derives its source material from *Evening Song No. 2* (2017), also composed for Bob Hurwitz, and Quartet Satz (2017), arranged for the Kronos Quartet's "50 for the Future" project. In its tertiary form the work is a 14-minute passacaglia which is more pianistic and completely realized than its predecessors.













Preceding Passacaglia is Glass' most recent work for solo piano, Elergy for the Present. It's almost necessary to write Elergy (sic) as this is not a misprint but rather an invented word. When asked, the composer responded, "In Baltimore when I was young, kids in the neighborhood were always making up words." Elergy was premiered in the summer of 2020 when the world was completely shut down because of the pandemic. Glass sent a photo of his manuscript to Davies and shortly thereafter it saw its premiere from the Ars Electronica Studios in Linz on one of the center's regular online offerings. A poignant performance, which



was recorded and posted online, this elegy, or "elergy," was played against live images of a rainy and completely empty New York City. Tonight's performance represents the American premiere.

The program concludes with yet another American premiere, Marc Reibel's Sakura II, "Variations on a Japanese Folk Song, Cherry Blossom." Reibel, a conductor and composer

whom Namekawa and Davies knew through his work at Linz's Landes-theater, would frequently take to the piano after premiere performances when the cast and musicians were celebrating. Among the celebrants, Reibel would improvise jazz and it was during these performances that Namekawa's ear was teased. She asked Reibel to create a jazz arrangement of Sakura she could use as an encore piece. Both Davies and Namekawa enjoyed the work so much they requested a four-hand version that will be heard tonight in its American premiere.



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### **About the Artists**

#### Maki Namekawa

Tokyo-born Maki Namekawa is a leading figure among today's pianists, bringing to audiences' attention contemporary music by international composers. As a soloist and a chamber musician equally at home in classical and repertoire of our time, she performs regularly at international venues such as Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center New York, Musikverein Vienna, Barbican Center and Cadogan Hall London, Citè de la musique Paris, Philharmonie de Paris, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, BOZAR Bruxelles, Suntory Hall and Sumida Toriphony Hall Tokyo, Salzburg Festival, Ars Electronica Festival, Musik-Biennale Berlin, Rheingau Musik Festival and Piano-Festival Ruhr.

Namekawa records and performs frequently for major radio networks in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, France, and USA. Orchestral engagements include Royal Concertgebouw Orkest Amsterdam, Münchner Philharmoniker, Bamberger Symphoniker, Dresdner Philharmonie, Bruckner Orchester Linz, Sinfonieorchester Basel, Filharmonie Brno, American Composers Orchestra, and Seattle Symphony.

Together with her husband, the conductor Dennis Russell Davies, Maki Namekawa formed a piano duo in 2003 which regularly performs in leading venues in Europe and North America including the Piano Festival Ruhr, the Radialsystem in Berlin, the Salzburg Festival, the Ars Electronica Festival, the Lincoln Center Festival, the Morgan Library, and "Roulette" in New York City, the Philips Collection in Washington, D.C., and Other Minds in San Francisco. Major works written for the Namekawa–Davies Duo include Philip Glass' Four Movements for Two

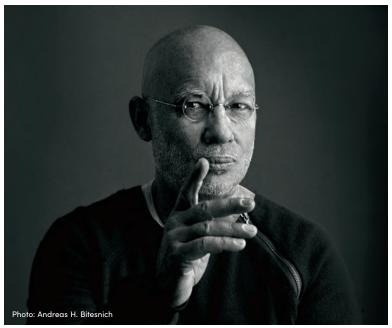
Pianos, Chen Yi's China West Suite, and Glass' Two Movements for Four Pianos (with Katia and Marielle Labèque) all commissioned by the Piano Festival Ruhr. In July 2017, Maki Namekawa, Dennis Russell Davies, and Philip Glass received the Piano Festival Ruhr Award. In 2019 Japanese composer Joe Hisaishi composed for the Namekawa-Davies Duo a work for two pianos and chamber orchestra Variation 57, premiered in Tokyo under the baton of the composer.

#### **Dennis Russell Davies**

Dennis Russell Davies' activities as opera and orchestral conductor, and as pianist and chamber musician, are characterized by an extensive repertory stretching from Baroque to the latest music of our time. Widely considered to be one of the most innovative and adventurous conductors/programmers in the classical music world, Davies has successfully challenged and inspired audiences on both sides of the Atlantic as well as in Japan. He is noted for exciting, well-structured concerts and for his close working relationships with such varied composers as Luciano Berio, William Bolcom, John Cage, Philip Glass, Heinz Winbeck, Aaron Copland, Lou Harrison, Laurie Anderson, Arvo Pärt, Hans Werner Henze, Kurt Schwertsik, Thomas Larcher, Balduin Sulzer, and Manfred Trojahn.

After first appointments as Music Director of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Chief Conductor of the American Composers Orchestra, which he led for 25 years, Davies moved to Europe as General Music Director of the Staatsoper Stuttgart, then Opera Bonn and the Beethoven Orchestra Bonn. He subsequently led the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, and the Sinfonieorchester Basel. In 2013, during his long and successful tenure in Linz as Chief Conductor of the Landestheater Linz and Bruckner Orchester Linz, Davies inaugurated the new Linzer Musiktheater conducting the World Premiere of Philip Glass'/Peter Handke's Spuren der Verirrten and R. Strauss' Rosenkavalier. As guest conductor in the USA, he has appeared with the orchestras of Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Boston, New York, and Cleveland. In Europe he has worked regularly with the Concertaebouw Orkest and the Gewandhaus Orchester and has conducted the Berliner Philharmoniker, Filarmonica della Scala, the St. Petersburg Philharmonia, as well as the Hamburg and Munich Philharmonic Orchestras.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1944, Davies studied piano and conducting at the Juilliard School in New York. From 1997-2012 he was professor for orchestral conducting at the University Mozarteum Salzburg; beginning in September 2020 he has been guest professor at the Janáček Academy of Music and performing Arts in Brno, Czech Republic. Since













2009, Dennis Russell Davies is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and has been awarded the German "Bundesverdienstkreuz," the Austrian "Ehrenkreuz für Wissenschaft und Kunst," as well as the title "Commandeur des Arts et Lettres" bestowed by the French Government

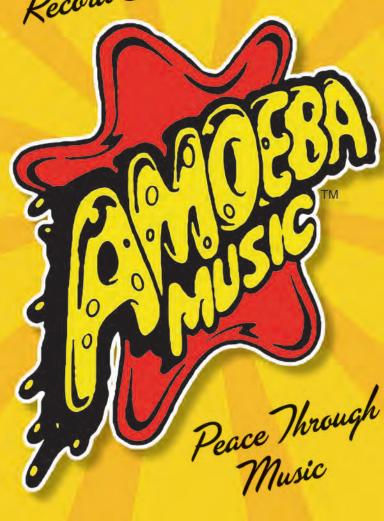
#### Cori O'Lan

Gerfried Stocker (aka Cori O'Lan) is a media artist and telecommunications engineer. In 1991, he founded x-space, a team formed to carry out interdisciplinary projects, which went on to produce numerous installations and performances featuring elements of interaction, robotics, and telecommunications. Since 1995, Gerfried Stocker has been artistic director of Ars Electronica. In 1995–96, he headed the crew of artists and technicians that developed the Ars Electronica Center's pioneering new exhibition strategies and set up the facility's in-house R&D department, the Ars Electronica Futurelab.

As artist Cori O'Lan, Stocker creates realtime audio visualization to accompany live musical performances. His work is created with interpolated animations using the frequency spectrum, dynamics, and timings of live performances. The result is a spontaneous reactive projected video work that dances along with the music in the hall, a welcome addition to veteran new music lovers and casual listeners alike. To quote the Austria Press Agency (September 17, 2017): "His visuals never insinuate themselves into the foreground or just react all too mechanically to the music; instead, they constitute the transposition of one world into the other."



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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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Other Minds thanks Ed Campion, Mark Shaw, Brendan West, Nadia Endara, and the rest of the staff at the Hertz Hall, University of California at Berkeley, for their assistance with tonight's event.

Bari Scott

Caren Meghreblian, Ph.D.

