

OTHER MINDS PRESENTS

# LATITUDES

THURSDAY MAY 18

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## GHOST ENSEMBLE

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MUSIC BY SKY MACKLAY, BEN  
RICHTER, CATHERINE LAMB

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST CHURCH



1661 15TH STREET, SAN FRANCISCO

Other Minds® presents

# LATITUDES: GHOST ENSEMBLE

May 18, 2023

The Episcopal Church of St. John the Evangelist  
1661 15th Street, San Francisco



## TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

**Catherine Lamb**

*interius/exterius* (2022) 45'

**Sky Macklay**

*Harmonifriends* (2022) 11'

**Ben Richter**

*Rewild* (2022) 50'

## GHOST ENSEMBLE

Margaret Lancaster, flute

Sky Macklay, oboe

Ben Richter, accordion

Chris Nappi, percussion

Melissa Achten, harp

Cassia Streb, viola

Laura Cetilia, cello

James Ilgenfritz, contrabass

Kyle Motl, contrabass

Carl Bettendorf, conductor



## CATHERINE LAMB

*We have suggested that Relation is an open totality evolving upon itself. That means that, thought of in this manner, it is the principle of unity that we subtract from this idea. In Relation the whole is not the finality of its parts: for multiplicity in totality is totally diversity.*

*Let us say this again, opaquely: the idea of totality alone is an obstacle to totality.*

**Édouard Glissant, For Opacity from *Poetics of Relation***



I developed this piece for/with the Ghost Ensemble in 2022. It follows some recent research on collective searching into harmonic identities, and how these collective intentions or focal points might allow various and sometimes unusual pathways to emerge. In the spirit of Pauline Oliveros, the subject of deep listening is absolutely central to the work. The listener becomes highlighted, always as one relates to another to another. In this case, moving through specific relations to achieve clear and expansive resultants as a total ensemble, one always emerging out of the other sequentially. Only when a group links together in phase can the suggestion towards other dimensions be initiated. Alignments touching together in a greater web of activity, it becomes completely about intention and desire within a community of musicians sounding together. How to achieve particular shapes clearly and plainly, with enough freedom to get lost in the music together. Roles towards the initiation of sound constantly shifting. Resultant points emerge and give momentum to the unfolding. This is my intention with the piece.

This commission has been made possible by the Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Program, with generous funding provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

**Catherine Lamb** is an active composer exploring the interaction of tone, summations of shapes and shadows, phenomenological expansions, the architecture of the liminal, and the long introduction form. She began her musical life early, later abandoning the conservatory in 2003 to study Hindustani music in Pune, India. She received her BFA in 2006 under James Tenney and Michael Pisaro at CalArts in Los Angeles, where she first developed her research into the interaction of tone. She mentored under the experimental filmmaker/Dhrupad musician Mani Kaul until his death in 2011. In 2012 she received her MFA in music/sound from the Milton Avery School of Fine Arts at Bard College in New York. She toured *Shade/Gradient* extensively and was

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awarded the Henry Cowell Research Fellowship to work with Éliane Radigue in Paris. In 2013, Lamb relocated to Berlin, Germany, where she lives currently, and has written for ensembles such as the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Konzert Minimal, Dedalus, Ensemble neoN, the London Contemporary Orchestra, as well as the JACK Quartet, while collaborating regularly with Marc Sabat, Johnny Chang (Viola Torros), Bryan Eubanks, and Rebecca Lane. In 2019, she co-founded the collectively oriented Harmonic Space Orchestra. She is a 2020 recipient of the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize, a 2018 recipient of the Grants to Artists award from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, a Staubach Fellow for the 2016 Darmstadt Summer course, and a 2016-2017 Schloss Solitude Fellow.



### SKY MACKLAY

*Harmonifriends* takes the form of a concerto featuring two of the composer's hand-crafted inflatable "harmonitree" sculptures, which use vinyl, fans, and dozens of deconstructed harmonicas, one containing harmonicas in A and the other in B-flat. However, the B-flat harmo-

nitree sits about a quarter-tone higher than the accordion, opening up a crunchy free-reed microtonal pitch space between them. The harmonitrees interact with the ensemble in sonic and kinetic counterpoint as they rise, sing, tremble, and fall.

The music of Baltimore-based composer, oboist, and installation artist **Sky Macklay** is conceptual yet expressive, exploring extreme contrasts, surreal tonality, audible processes, humor, and the physicality of sound. Some of her pieces incorporate intermedia and extramusical narratives, addressing topics ranging from commuting times to the side effects of contraceptive and

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assisted reproductive technology. Sky Macklay is Ghost Ensemble's founding oboist, a 2021 Guggenheim Fellow, and serves on the composition faculty of the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University.

### BEN RICHTER

*Rewild* is inspired by the perspectives and timescales of nonhuman beings, the manifold periodicities of deep time, and distant orders of magnitude in the universe of life. Its musical parameters seek new strata in the uncanny zones at which pitch becomes rhythm, harmonic interval becomes beating rate, and timbres morph over time, following the fractal symmetry by which each order of magnitude in biology — organelle, cell, organism, ecosystem, biosphere — resembles and mirrors the others. By offering an aural metaphor for the interacting gradual processes of quantum and cosmic systems, *Rewild* aims to orient listening toward the vast and infinitesimal timescales we do not experience in everyday life. Perhaps the more we are able to listen as plants, mushrooms, rhizospheres, ecosystems, the more we can see ourselves not just as individuals or as a species, but as blood cells in the higher-level organism of the biosphere.

**Ben Richter** is a composer, accordionist, and founding director of Ghost Ensemble. Inspired by nonhuman consciousness, emergent perceptual horizons, and the potential of the act of listening to create experiences of community healing, Ben's immersive, gradually evolving compositions mark humanity's transient yet vital role within the immensity of geologic time. Ben's recent collaborators include Koan Quartet, loadbang, Ensemble Linea, Music For Your Inbox, Capella Ornamentata, SEM Ensemble, Nieuw Ensemble, Wild Rumpus, Daniel Costello, Nomi Epstein, Jeonghyeon Joo, Phill Niblock, and





Michael Pisaro. A student of Pauline Oliveros, Ben explores the extended microtonal and timbral potential of the accordion in works such as *Panthalassa: Dream Music of the Once and Future Ocean*.

**Ghost Ensemble** fosters groundbreaking music that blurs borders of genre, style, and scene, expanding perceptual horizons through shared immersive experience. Collaboration with living composers is its primary focus. Since its 2012 inception, the ensemble has performed over 100 works and commissioned 34 new compositions by a diverse range of highly original composers who share a belief in music's potential for individual and community transformation. Rethinking the norms of composer/performer collaboration, Ghost Ensemble conducts innovative workshops to nurture adventurous new music over the course of multiple seasons. The resulting work often draws from contemporary classical, experimental chamber music, avant-garde jazz, environmental sound art, and territories in between. Critics have praised Ghost Ensemble performances as "prodigious ... a thrilling listen" (Christian Carey, *Sequenza21*), "wonderful work ... both exhilarating and a bit scary" (Peter Margasak, *Bandcamp Daily*), "beautifully performed and recorded ... a body-felt sound mass ... a multifaceted texture that evokes the primeval" (Meg Wilhoite, *Sound Meets Sound*), and "cloudy, mysterious, and dark ... Beckettian in its slow spread ... certainly a group to keep an eye on" (Brian Olewnick, *Just Outside*).

Ghost Ensemble's concerts with works by Catherine Lamb, Sky Macklay, and Miya Masaoka are presented with the friendly support of

## ABOUT OTHER MINDS

Founded in San Francisco in 1992, Other Minds is a leading organization for new and experimental music in all its forms, devoted to championing the most original, eccentric, and underrepresented creative voices in contemporary music. 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. For more information, visit us online at [otherminds.org](https://otherminds.org), or use the QR code below to donate.

## ABOUT ST. JOHN'S

Diverse people, inquiring minds, open hearts. St. John's has been described by many as an oasis not only for the tranquility of our garden amidst the surrounding bustling streets, but because so many have found St. John's to be a place of loving peace, healing, and renewal in an often all-too-broken world. Our mission is to live, love, and serve in the hope and joy of the risen Christ. For more info visit [saintjohnsf.org/about](https://saintjohnsf.org/about).

Thanks to our supporters: Mary-Lawrence Hicks, Sophia Zimmermann, Dani Ushizima, Fred Marett, Rev. Kevin Deal, Michael Haines, Tom Newton, Rudolfo Carbajal, Sara Swenson, Michael Howard, Stoner Lichty, Rob Tan, Ravi Bhaskar, Mary Soubirous, William Visscher

We would like to express our gratitude to all who contributed to today's recital. If you are interested in helping support Music at Saint John's recitals, you may make a donation online at the following address. Please be sure to select "music fund" from the designation drop-down menu. <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/sjedonate>.

Note: Today's recital is being streamed and/or video recorded, and a recording will be available via our mailing list. Flash photography and recording are prohibited.

## CREDITS

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