

Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at 7:30pm  
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

## **Sō Percussion**

*The Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence*

Eric Cha-Beach

Josh Quillen

Adam Sliwinski

Jason Treuting

with **Nicole Lizée**, *composer/turntables*

### **PROGRAM**

NICOLE LIZÉE  
(b. 1973)

*White Label Experiment* (2012)

SUZANNE FARRIN  
(b. 1976)

*a diamond in the square* (2019)

~~INTERMISSION~~

Sō PERCUSSION

*From Out A Darker Sea* (2015)

I. Coal and Flower

II. Four Portraits

III. Harold and Sylvia

IV. Song for Billy

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

**Nicole Lizée**

*White Label Experiment* (2012)

“Percussion music is revolution” John Cage, 1939

When Cage spoke these words could he have been in part referring to turntables in percussion music? I think so.

*White Label Experiment* pays homage to certain ideas and philosophies that Cage introduced to the world of art music, referring to both his music and words. The instrument choices are a major component of the piece as Cage’s aesthetic included the coaxing of new and unconventional sounds from instruments and the integration of non-traditional instruments into his work. This work includes various objets trouvés (i.e. typewriters, vinyl records on portable turntables hit with mallets); treating these objects as percussion instruments, regardless of their original intended purpose.

Preparation - arguably one of Cage’s most significant contributions to modern music and music makers - is used on the vinyl records to design new paths for the stylus by altering and damaging their surfaces, generating patterns, grooves, and melodies.

These components come together to create one integral idea: this work is a kind of dance music; a re-imagining of a rave. Had Cage hosted such a party in 1990, maybe it might have been something like this.

Awarded the 2013 Canada Council for the Arts Jules-Léger Prize for New Chamber Music.

by Nicole Lizée, ©2012

Commissioned by Soundstreams for Sō Percussion  
with the generous support of the Canada Council for the Arts.  
Premiered on March 2, 2012 at Koerner Hall, Toronto.

**Suzanne Farrin**

*a diamond in the square (2019)*

The diamond in the square is a quilting pattern consisting of two objects. The inner square is rotated 45 degrees to become a diamond while the other forms its boarder. In Amish communities, the colors are usually bold and solid, giving way to intricate, nearly invisible stitching patterns that loop and connect the entire piece. The thread seems to create an invisible language whose contrasts are created through subtle changes in texture rather than color or pattern. You must adjust your eyes to see them. Diamonds in the square are found all over American folk art quilting. Probably like many of you, I recognized the image before I knew how to name it.

And perhaps also like you, I was raised in the atmospheres of women's work. The body hunched over a piece, the collecting and discussion of fabrics, yarn, and needles, the meditation of the mind over repetitive tasks. I loved to participate in these projects, though I did not have nearly the skills of the women in my family. They could mend, create, and transform objects (and people) through interwoven fibers. In this work, the fibers are given sound. A collection of strings from yarns to lobster cord move through the piano as if on a loom. The workers are hunched over their art and slowing separating from their physical bodies, which is exactly what I saw my grandmothers do as they sat in the evenings with their crochet, their knitting, their quilting, their...

By Suzanne Farrin, ©2019

Co-commissioned by University of Colorado-Colorado Springs,  
The National Gallery, Washington, D. C., and The New York State Council on the Arts  
with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

**Sō Percussion**

*From Out A Darker Sea (2015)*

For two centuries the coal industry formed the backbone of the North East of England. Entire communities sprang into existence as fervent mining activity fueled the industrial revolution. Economic opportunity existed, but was always accompanied by the looming threat of danger or death. Those who can recall that time manifest a peculiar combination of exceeding pride in their hard-working heritage and unflinching acceptance of the horrors that mining visited upon them.

But an industry is not a place. The North East, with its winding, rugged coastline and breathtaking fields of yellow rapeseed, has existed for human and geologic eons. It has seen transformation after transformation. The beaches that were once black with soot are now clean; the people, descended from Vikings, Celts, Romans, Normans, Angles, and Saxons, remain, even as industry shrugs its shoulders.

*From Out A Darker Sea* is not about coal, but like everything in this area, there are always traces of its presence. The sea never ceases as it rusts discarded mining machines into autumnal colors, doing its work day and night as it will for ages. The North East is not frozen in time - it churns forward with the same ambivalent relationship to a new globalized culture as the rest of us, while at the same time laboring not to forget a proud history.

This piece incorporates music, film, and visual art. It exists in four parts:

- I. Coal and Flower: This piece finds inspiration in the contrast of the strong black dust and residue of coal and the vivid yellow canvas of the rapeseed fields.
- II. Four Portraits: Created together with students from East Durham College in the UK. Students have highlighted something in their life that is so mundane as to be almost invisible, taking inspiration from the artist Robert Rauschenberg who said, “I feel very sorry for people who think things like soup cans or mirrors or Coke bottles are ugly, because they are surrounded by things like that all day, and it must make them miserable.
- III. Harold and Sylvia: Draws upon a slightly misremembered dialogue that Josh from *Sō Percussion* wrote after meeting people at a community outreach event. Interspersed are entries from the diary of Josh’s father when he was suffering from ALS (Motor Neuron Disease).
- IV. Song for Billy: Created together with Amber Film and Photography Collective, the work has grown out of Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen’s *The Coal Coast* photographs.

Dedicated to Billy, Fred, Harold, and Sylvia.

by Adam Sliwinski, ©2016

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

With innovative multi-genre original productions, sensational interpretations of modern works, more than 20 albums, and an “exhilarating blend of precision and anarchy, rigor and bedlam,” (*The New Yorker*), **Sō Percussion** has redefined the scope and role of the modern percussion ensemble.

Their repertoire ranges from “classics” of the 20th century, by John Cage, Steve Reich, and Iannis Xenakis, et al, to commissioning and advocating works by contemporary composers such as David Lang, Julia Wolfe, Steve Mackey, and Caroline Shaw, to distinctively modern collaborations with artists who work outside the classical concert hall, including Shara Nova, the electronic duo Matmos, the choreographer Susan Marshall, Wilco’s Glenn Kotche, Bryce Dessner, and many others.

Sō Percussion also composes and performs their own works, ranging from standard concert pieces to immersive multi-genre programs – including *From Out A Darker Sea*, *Imaginary City*, *Where (we) Live*, and *A Gun Show*, which was presented in a multi-performance presentation as part of BAM’s 2016 Next Wave Festival. In these concert-length programs, Sō Percussion employs a distinctively 21st century synthesis of original music, artistic collaboration, theatrical production values and visual art, into a powerful exploration of their own unique and personal creative experiences.

In 2018/19, Sō Percussion collaborates with a range of incredible artists, working to bring original work to audiences around the world. Sō tours a brand-new percussion quartet by the phenomenally talented composer/pianist Vijay Iyer; performs Caroline Shaw’s *Narrow Sea* with soprano Dawn Upshaw and pianist Gil Kalish at Ravinia; and returns to David Lang’s *man made* at the Chautauqua Festival. Looking forward, Sō premieres new percussion quartets by Angélica Negrón, Suzanne Farrin, and by Julia Wolfe (co-commissioned by Carnegie Hall and the LA Phil), performs at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC; at UC-Berkeley, Stanford Live, plays Steve Reich’s complete *Drumming* for the Celebrity Series of Boston – and much more.

Recent highlights include the New York premiere of David Lang’s *man made* with Louis Langrée and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra; performances of an acclaimed Trilogy portrait at the Lincoln Center Festival; *Narrow Sea*, a new work by Caroline Shaw with Dawn Upshaw and Gil Kalish, at the Kennedy Center, San Francisco Performances, UCLA, Penn State, Ravinia, and elsewhere; returns to Carnegie Hall with the JACK Quartet in a program of new works by Donnacha Dennehy and Dan Trueman; appearances at Bonnaroo, the Eaux Claires Festival, MassMoCA, and TED 2016; international tours to Poland and

Ireland; *man made* with Gustavo Dudamel and the LA Phil; Bryce Dessner's *Music for Wood and Strings* at the Barbican in London; and an original score for a live performance and broadcast of WNYC's Radiolab with Jad Abumrad and Robert Krulwich at BAM.

Rooted in the belief that music is an essential facet of human life, a social bond, and an effective tool in creating agency and citizenship, Sō Percussion enthusiastically pursues a growing range of social and community outreach. Examples include their Brooklyn Bound presentations of younger composers; commitments to purchasing offsets to compensate for carbon-heavy activities such as touring travel; and leading their SōSI students in an annual food-packing drive, yielding up to 35,000 meals, for the Crisis Center of Mercer County through the organization EndHungerNE.

This season, Sō Percussion celebrates its fifth year as the Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence at Princeton University. Through this residency, Sō presents an annual series of concerts, collaborates closely with University faculty and students, and offer performances throughout the community. They also run the annual Sō Percussion Summer Institute (SōSI, which marked its tenth anniversary in 2018), providing college-age composers and percussionists an immersive exposure to collaboration and project development.

Sō Percussion's 2018-2019 season is supported in part by awards from:

- The National Endowment for the Arts. To find out more about how National Endowment for the Arts grants impact individuals and communities, visit [www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov)
- The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature
- The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council
- The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc
- The Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University
- The Amphion Foundation
- The Brookby Foundation
- The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation
- The Howard Gilman Foundation
- New Music USA's NYC New Music Impact Fund, made possible with funding from The Scherman Foundation's Katharine S. and Axel G. Rosin Fund

Sō Percussion uses Vic Firth sticks, Zildjian cymbals, Remo drumheads, Estey Organs, and Pearl/Adams instruments. Sō Percussion would like to thank these companies for their generous support and donations.”

Award-winning composer and video artist composer **Nicole Lizée** has been called “a brilliant musical scientist” (CBC), “breathtakingly inventive” (*Sydney Times Herald*, Australia), and has been lauded for “creating a stir with listeners for her breathless imagination and ability to capture Gen-X and beyond generation” (*Winnipeg Free Press*, Canada). She creates new music from an eclectic mix of influences including the earliest MTV videos, turntablism, rave culture, Alfred Hitchcock, Stanley Kubrick, Alexander McQueen, thrash metal, early video game culture, 1960s psychedelia, and 1960s modernism. Nicole is fascinated by the glitches made by outmoded and well-worn technology and captures these glitches, notates them, and integrates them into live performance.

Her compositions range from works for orchestra and solo turntablist featuring DJ techniques fully notated and integrated into a concert music setting, to other unorthodox instrument combinations that include the Atari 2600 video game console, omnichords, stylophones, SimonTM, vintage board games, and karaoke tapes. In the broad scope of her evolving oeuvre, she explores such themes as malfunction, reviving the obsolete, and the harnessing of imperfection and glitch to create a new kind of precision.

In 2001 Nicole received a Master of Music degree from McGill University. After a decade and a half of composition, her commission list of over 50 works is varied and distinguished and includes the Kronos Quartet, Carnegie Hall, the New York Philharmonic, the BBC Proms, the San Francisco Symphony, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, l’Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, the Banff Centre, Bang On A Can, Sō Percussion, Eve Egoyan, stargaze, the Australian Art Orchestra, l’Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal, CBC, Radio-Canada, Kaufman Music Center (New York City), Joby Burgess/Powerplant, Music on Main, Darcy James Argue’s Secret Society, Ben Reimer, Vicky Chow, Tapestry Opera, Standing Wave, Gryphon Trio, MATA Festival, TorQ Percussion, Fondation Arte Musica/Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, E-Gré National Music Competition, Innovations en Concert, Continuum, Soundstreams, SMCQ, Arraymusic, Megumi Masaki, ECM+, and the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Her music has been performed worldwide in renowned venues including Carnegie Hall (NYC), Royal Albert Hall (London), Muziekgebouw (Amsterdam) and Cité de la Musique (Paris) – and in festivals including the BBC Proms (UK), Huddersfield (UK), Roskilde (Denmark), Bang On a Can (USA), Classical:NEXT (Rotterdam), All Tomorrow’s Parties (UK), Barbican’s Sound Unbound (UK), Metropolis (Australia), Sydney Festival (Australia), X Avant (Canada), Luminato (Canada), Other Minds (San Francisco), C3 (Berlin), Ecstatic (NYC), Switchboard (San Francisco), Melos-Ethos (Slovakia), Casalmaggiore (Italy), and Dark Music Days (Iceland).

Nicole was recently awarded the prestigious 2019 Prix Opus for Composer of the Year. In 2017 she received the SOCAN Jan. V. Matejcek Award. In 2013 she received the Canada Council for the Arts Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music. She is a two-time JUNO nominee for composition of the year. She is a Lucas Artists Fellow (California) and a Civitella Ranieri Foundation Fellow (Italy). In 2015 she was selected by acclaimed composer and conductor Howard Shore to be his protégée as part of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards. *This Will Not Be Televised*, her seminal piece for chamber ensemble and turntables, placed in the 2008 UNESCO International Rostrum of Composers' Top 10 Works. Her work for piano and notated glitch, *Hitchcock Études*, was chosen by the International Society for Contemporary Music and featured at the 2014 World Music Days in Wrocław, Poland. Additional awards and nominations include an Images Festival Award (2016), Dora Mavor Moore nomination in Opera (2015), Prix Opus nomination (2013), two Prix collégien de musique contemporaine, (2012, 2013) and the 2002 Canada Council for the Arts Robert Fleming Prize for achievements in composition.

Nicole was the Composer in Residence at Vancouver's Music on Main from 2016-18. She is a Korg Canada and Arturia artist.

**Suzanne Farrin** is a composer who explores the interior worlds of instruments and the visceral potentialities of sound. Her music has been featured at venues and festivals including The Gothenburg Art Biennial, Matrix, Alpenklassik, Music in Würzburg, Theaterforum (Germany), Town Hall Seattle, Wigmore Hall, the Walker Art Center, Centro de Artes de la Universidad Nacional de San Martín (Argentina) and, in New York (where she lives) Mostly Mozart, Weill Hall, Symphony Space, BAM NextWave, The Stone, Spectrum, Subculture, Miller Theater, Merkin Concert Hall, Wavehill, Lincoln Center, the Park Avenue Armory, and Joe's Pub, among many others.

In addition to composing, Suzanne is a performer of the ondes Martenot, an early electronic instrument, and has performed at the Abrons Arts Center in New York City and Centro de Artes in Buenos Aires, as well as in an episode on the Amazon series *Mozart in the Jungle*. She is featured as a performer in *Chicuarotes*, a feature-film directed by Gael Garcia Bernal, as well as the Iranian film *Sade Ma'bar* (Blockage) directed by Mohsen Gharaie.

Suzanne is the Frayda B. Lindemann Professor of Music and Chair at Hunter College and The CUNY Graduate Center, where she teaches composition. She holds a doctorate from Yale University. *Corpo di Terra* (New Focus Recordings) is devoted entirely to her work, which may also be heard on the VAI, Signum Classics, Tundra, and Albany Records labels. She was the 2017 Frederic A. Juilliard/Walter Damrosch Rome Prize winner in Composition.