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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 7, 2019

[Press Room](#)



Images of Eighth Blackbird are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS  
EIGHTH BLACKBIRD  
PERFORMING FIVE BAY AREA PREMIERES  
INCLUDING A NEW WORK BY PAMELA Z,  
PIONEERING BAY AREA SOUND ARTIST & VOCALIST  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14 IN ZELLERBACH PLAYHOUSE**

**Berkeley, November 7, 2019** — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents Chicago’s award-winning new-music ensemble **Eighth Blackbird** in a concert of nine contemporary works, including five Bay Area premieres, with works by next-generation composers **Nina Shekhar**, **Viet Cuong**, **Fjóla Evans**, and **Holly Harrison**, and by San Francisco composer, performer, and electronic musician **Pamela Z**. Pamela Z joins the ensemble for the first Bay Area performance of her new work, *Ways of Looking*, which explores the musicality of speech sounds; she will also

perform two solo works, *Quatre Couches* and *Badagada*. Eighth Blackbird performs in Zellerbach Playhouse on Saturday, December 14 at 8pm.

Pamela Z has described *Ways of Looking*, which was commissioned by Eighth Blackbird, as a “sonic portrait” of the ensemble. She interviewed the six members of the ensemble to create the piece, which combines live acoustic performance with a fixed media track and a vocal part that she performs and processes live. As Pamela Z has described, “I meticulously selected sentences, phrases, words, syllables, and phonemes to create sonic building blocks for the piece. This work is in four movements, and each movement focuses on sounds or concepts culled from those interviews.” The four other local premieres on the program take their inspiration from a range of sources. Australian composer Holly Harrison’s short, energetic *Lobster Tales and Turtle Soup* (2016) is inspired by Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Nina Shekhar’s *ice ‘n’ SPICE* (2018) conjures the sensations of the spicy Indian food she ate as an Indian-American child; and Canadian/Icelandic composer Fjóla Evans’ *Eroding* (2017) explores the process of erosion of the glacial river Hvítá in Iceland. American composer Viet Cuong’s *Electric Aroma* (2017) is a propulsive, distorted tango inspired by the poetry of Pablo Picasso.

Eighth Blackbird, founded in 1996, has won four Grammy Awards and has been a recipient of a MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions. The sextet’s “Pierrot” instrumentation in Berkeley features Nathalie Joachim, flutes; Matt Albert, violin; Matthew Duvall, percussion; Zachary Good, clarinets; Nick Photinos, cello; and Lisa Kaplan, piano. Good and Albert are currently performing with the ensemble during vacancies in those positions.

A pre-performance talk is planned at 7pm in Zellerbach Playhouse, with pianist Sarah Cahill and pianist/composer Myra Melford, a professor in the UC Berkeley Department of Music. This event is free to concert ticket holders.

### **Ticket Information**

Tickets for *Eighth Blackbird* on Saturday, December 14 at 8pm in Zellerbach Playhouse range from \$26–\$42 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org), and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to [calperformances.org/discounts](http://calperformances.org/discounts).

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Saturday, December 14, 8pm**

**Zellerbach Playhouse** \**Note venue change*  
Bancroft Way at Dana Street  
UC Berkeley campus

***New Music***  
**Eighth Blackbird**

**Program:**

Nina Shekhar/*ice 'n' SPICE* (Bay Area Premiere)  
Viet Cuong/*Electric Aroma* (Bay Area Premiere)  
Fjóla Evans/*Eroding* (Bay Area Premiere)  
Holly Harrison/*Lobster Tales and Turtle Soup* (Bay Area Premiere)  
Andy Akiho/*Karakurenai*  
Jonathan Bailey Holland/*The Clarity of Cold Air*  
Pamela Z./*Quatre Couches* and *Badagada*  
Pamela Z./*Ways of Looking* (Bay Area Premiere)

**Tickets:** \$26–\$42 (prices subject to change)

**Residency Activities**

**Pre-performance Talk**

**Saturday, Dec 14, 7pm**

**Zellerbach Playhouse**

With pianist Sarah Cahill and pianist/composer Myra Melford (UC Berkeley Dept. of Music).  
Free to concert ticketholders.

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