



Saturday, November 12, 2022, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Sō Percussion

Eric Cha-Beach, Josh Quillen, Adam Sliwinski, Jason Treuting

PROGRAM

Angélica NEGRÓN (b. 1981) *gone* (2018, Bay Area Premiere)
go back (2022, Bay Area Premiere)

Nathalie JOACHIM (b. 1983) *Note to Self* (2021, Bay Area Premiere)
Much More
Maybe
Motivated

INTERMISSION

Dan TRUEMAN (b. 1968) *neither Anvil nor Pulley* (2010)
Act 1: Another Wallflower [from Long Ago]
Act 2: 120 bpm
[or, What is your Metronome Thinking?]
Act 3: A Cow Call
[please oh Please Come Home!]
Act 4: Feedback [in Which a Famous
Bach Prelude becomes Ill-Tempered]
Act 5: Hang Dog Springar [a Slow Dance]

Angélica Negrón
*gone and go back**Commissioned for Sō Percussion*

gone and *go back* are two short pieces written for Sō Percussion as part of a three-part series inspired by things I deeply care about but am sometimes afraid to confront. Each piece in the series focuses on the quartet's interactions with a series of mechanical instruments built by Brooklyn-based artist and engineer Nick Yulman. Yulman's sound machines (called the Bricolo Mechanical Music System) consist of a variety of mechanical modules that users can attach to acoustic instruments or physical objects, allowing digital music makers to incorporate robotics into their performance and recording setups. Each piece requires the performers to interact with the modular music devices in different ways.

The first piece in this series, *gone*, was written in 2018 and explores the visceral physical feelings of emptiness and absence while at the same time searching for connections and meaning in those things and the people who are left. The second piece, *go back*, written in 2022, confronts the anxiety and internal conflict I have around the idea of returning to my home of Puerto Rico. I've been living in New York for the past 15 years and though I'm constantly traveling back to the island to visit family and friends, for the past few years there seems to be a growing pressure and almost impulsive need to return home. Parents getting older, close friends returning to the island and raising their new families, as well as a new wave of young Diasporicans returning to contribute to rebuilding the island after many recent natural disasters and social and political crises (including disaster capitalism). Circular migration has long been a part of the Puerto Rican narrative and over the past few years, I've been struggling constantly with my desire to come

back to the island, a growing sense of duty to participate in the local "fight," my increasing yearning to be close to my loved ones, and the difficult realization that this might not be the best decision for me at this point in my career and life. *go back* uses *cacerolas* and *calderos* (pots and pans) in Nick's mechanical modular devices to evoke the domestic sounds of my childhood, as well as the sounds of resilience and resistance that characterize many of the protests on the island and in the diaspora—creating a particular form of sonic protest known as "cacerolazo."

—Angélica Negrón

Nathalie Joachim
Note to Self

This work was co-commissioned for Sō Percussion by Andrew W. Siegel and Carnegie Hall. The world premiere was given by Sō Percussion at Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall, in New York City, on December 11, 2021.

Though I've spent much of my life trying to quiet my inner voice, for this work, I chose to focus on and explore the thoughts that occupy my headspace as a result of my chronic anxiety.

Note to Self, for percussion quartet and recorded samples of my voice, takes the listener through different phases of cyclical thoughts and states of being that I experience regularly. Composed in three short movements—*Much More, Maybe, and Motivated*—this work examines the notion of having my inner voice embodied elsewhere, in an attempt to create new space for processing emotion. It also plays with repetition as an opportunity to bring new meaning, understanding, and perhaps some levity to the language itself. Each movement is a re-imagining of vocal incantations that, driven by imaginative, virtuosic, and whimsical percussion scoring, re-center and re-purpose my voice as a tool for healing.

—Nathalie Joachim

Dan Trueman*neither Anvil nor Pulley*

Premiered on March 11, 2010 at the University of Texas, Austin.

neither Anvil nor Pulley is an epic musical exploration of the man/machine relationship in the digital age. In the second movement, the piece explores how differently machines and people measure time—a long-time interest of mine. The laptops provide a constant click at 120 beats-per-minute (at first), but the humans can reset the metronomes at any time by striking a handy piece of wood. Not to be thwarted, the clicks keep re-emerging, like Whac-A-Mole, relentless.

The fourth movement also investigates using a computer as a storage bin and the many ways of messing with the things we store. A concert bass-drum becomes a speaker that is caressed (by speaker drivers taped to its heads) rather than struck, and its output is fed back to the computer with hand-held microphones. The computer stores that sound for a very short period of time, works some magic, and then sends it

right back out again, transformed, to the speaker-drum, where the process starts again. Surrounding the concert bass-drum are an array of digital drum machines that also use feedback in unusual ways, and a real-live drummer, who attempts to survive what amounts to a brutal, accelerating, digital blender: this truly is man versus machine!

Composing for (I really should say “with”) Sō Percussion is an incredible pleasure. The members’ collaborative and adventurous spirits (not to mention their sheer musical abilities) are awesome. In the past, I’ve had the privilege of actually performing my own music with them, and to this day, I’ve never become comfortable with that traditional (or is it?) role of the composer: sitting in the audience. I’d much rather be up there with my fiddle! Well, placed around and in between 120 bpm and Feedback are three fiddle tunes that sound from long ago as well as sounds of the fiddle itself embedded deep within 120 bpm, frozen in time, and extracted from the computer via, of all things, a modified \$12 golf video game controller.

—Dan Trueman

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

For 20 years and counting, **Sō Percussion** has redefined chamber music for the 21st century through an “exhilarating blend of precision and anarchy, rigor and bedlam” (*The New Yorker*). The group is celebrated by audiences and presenters for a dazzling range of work: for live performances in which “telepathic powers of communication” (*The New York Times*) bring to life the vibrant percussion repertoire; for an extravagant array of collaborations in classical music, pop, indie rock, contemporary dance, and theater; and for its work in education and community building, creating opportunities and platforms for music and artists that explore the immense possibilities of art in our time.

Recent highlights have included performances at the Elbphilharmonie, Big Ears 2022, where the group played *Amid the Noise*, premiered a new work by Angélica Negrón with the Kronos Quartet, and performed its Nonesuch album with Caroline Shaw, *Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part*; and a return to Carnegie Hall, where it performed new collaborations with Nathalie Joachim, and Dominic Shodekeh Talifero. *Narrow Sea*, the group’s Nonesuch recording with Caroline Shaw, Dawn Upshaw, and Gilbert Kalish, won the 2022 Grammy Award for Best Composition. Other albums include *A Record Of...* on Brassland Music with Buke and Gase, and an acclaimed version of Julius Eastman’s *Stay On It* on the new imprint Sō

Percussion Editions. This adds to a catalogue of more than 25 albums featuring landmark recordings of works by David Lang, Steve Reich, Steve Mackey, and many others.

During the summer of 2022, Sō performed at the Music Academy of the West Festival, Newport Classical, and Time Spans in New York, as well as four concerts at Our Festival in Helsinki, a visit that included a performance of *Let the Soil* with Caroline Shaw. Other dates this coming season include concerts at the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona, the Barbican Centre in London, the Kennedy Center, and at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. This fall, Sō Percussion begins its ninth year as the Edward T. Cone performers-in-residence at Princeton University.

Rooted in the belief that music is an elemental form of human communication, and galvanized by forces for social change in recent years, Sō enthusiastically pursues a range of social and community outreach through its nonprofit organization, including partnerships with local ensembles including Pan in Motion and Castle of Our Skins; the group's Brooklyn Bound concert series; a studio residency program in Brooklyn; and the Sō Percussion Summer Institute, an intensive two-week chamber music seminar for percussionists and composers.

www.sopercussion.com

Thank You

Sō Percussion's 2022–23 season is supported, in part, by awards from:

- The National Endowment for the Arts. To find out more about how NEA grants impact individuals and communities, visit www.arts.gov.
- The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature
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- The Brookby Foundation
- The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation
- The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation
- The Howard Gilman Foundation
- The Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation

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.

COVID-19: Masking is required inside the auditorium, and is strongly recommended, though not required, for indoor lobby/waiting areas as well as outdoor spaces. Up-to-date vaccination is strongly recommended, though not required for entry. The latest information on Cal Performances' COVID-19 safety policies is available at calperformances.org/safety.

Photographing and/or recording this performance is strictly prohibited.