



Thursday, April 20, 2023, 7:30pm  
Zellerbach Hall

## Sō Percussion with Caroline Shaw, *voice*

Sō Percussion  
Eric Cha-Beach  
Josh Quillen  
Adam Sliwinski  
Jason Treuting

### PROGRAM

SŌ PERCUSSION    *Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part* (2020)  
AND CAROLINE SHAW (b. 1982)  
To the Sky  
The Flood is Following Me  
Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part  
Long Ago We Counted  
A Gradual Dazzle  
Lay All Your Love On Me  
Cast the Bells in Sand  
Some Bright Morning  
A Veil Awake Upon the Waves  
Other Song

### INTERMISSION

JASON TREUTING (b. 1977)    *Amid the Noise* (2006)

*Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part*  
Sō Percussion and Caroline Shaw

Caroline Shaw and Sō Percussion combine forces for a powerful new original set of songs composed together. Shaw's faultless ear for melody and harmony, combined with Sō's rhythmic invention and compositional experimentation, make for a world of sonic richness that feels fresh and unique. It is a journey across the landscape of the soul, told through the medium of distinctly contemporary songs and represents Shaw's debut as a solo vocal artist.

Shared lifetimes of voluminous musical and literary experiences traverse the spiritual realms of the *Sacred Harp* hymnal and the *Book of Ruth*; the oceanic ruminations of James Joyce; the American roots song "I'll Fly Away" filtered through medieval plainchant; and even the pop group ABBA. Sonically, there is no other collaboration to compare it to. Shaw's voice cycles through the gently intimate, to penetrating rapture, through layers of constructed counterpoint, while Sō Percussion's nearly endless menagerie of instruments and techniques provides varying accompaniments of drums, piano, marimba, steel drums, electronics, tuned flower pots, toys, synthesizers, and much more.

The thrill in this collaboration lies partly in the realization that each entity adds dimensions to the other's music, a process that revitalizes them both. Shaw gives voice and melody to the years of experimentation in rhythm, color, and complexity that define Sō's work over two decades and more than 20 albums. In turn, Sō opens a world of sonic possibilities and rhythmic virtuosity that dramatically expands Shaw's palette beyond the vocal and string writing for which she is best known.

In this collection of 10 songs, forces alternate between tightly crafted orchestrations and spontaneous duets between Shaw and each of the four members of So Percussion. The title song of the set features Shaw's un-

adorned voice setting her own words, accompanied by Josh Quillen's lyrical strumming on the steel drums. In "Lay All Your Love On Me," Shaw and Adam Sliwinski concoct a stately motet for voice and marimba out of the chorus from ABBA's famous hit song. In "Long Ago We Counted," Jason Treuting unleashes cascades of his signature drumming underneath otherworldly loops of Shaw's voice. With "Some Bright Morning," Eric Cha-Beach simmers various layers of ambient drones under Shaw's gradually unfolding synthesis of "I'll Fly Away" and the 13th-century plainchant "Salve Regina."

Other songs build layers of instrumentation as blocks of rhythm and sound underneath Shaw's voice. "Find the Line" ("Other Song") announces itself with a progression of flower pot harmony, which builds surprisingly into an uplifting, anthemic celebration of life and devotion. Two songs—"The Flood is Following Me" and "A Veil Awake Upon the Waves"—take their titles from lines in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Both are thick with layers of ambivalence and reflection. "Soon our Transient Comforts Fly" ("To the Sky") builds interlocking rhythms reminiscent of Steve Reich, which Shaw elevates with a yawp of spiritual ecstasy from the *Sacred Harp* tradition.

*Amid the Noise*

Jason Treuting

*Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.*

—Max Ehrmann's "Desiderata"

Jason Treuting's *Amid the Noise* began as a soundtrack, which morphed into our third album and then into a flexible set of live music. Now it is a communal music-making project that can occur with a flexible number of musicians in almost any combination.

The musical ideas in *Amid the Noise* are abstract: drones, melodies, rhythms, textures, patterns. Originally, So Percussion or-

chestrated them on the instruments we had in our studio, but we've since discovered that accordion, organ, or tuba might play a satisfying drone as well as bowed vibraphone. Like Terry Riley's *In C*, this work maintains its identity and integrity even through wildly different realizations.

This modular concept allows us to conduct residencies that reach beyond percussion departments. Many kinds of students at a music school or conservatory can participate in *Amid the Noise*: vocalists, string quartets, wind and brass players, guitarists, and, of course, percussionists.

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## 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, creating opportunities and platforms for music and artists that explore the immense possibility of art in our time.

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

Donovan Thomas' *Individuate*. These recordings add to a catalogue of more than 25 albums featuring landmark recordings of works by composers including David Lang, Steve Reich, and Steve Mackey.

During the summer of 2022, Sō Percussion appeared at the Music Academy of the West Festival, Newport Classical, at Time Spans in New York, as well as giving four concerts at Our Festival in Helsinki, including a performance of *Let the Soil...* with Caroline Shaw. Dates last season included concerts here at Cal Performances, and at the Palau de la Musica Catalana in Barcelona; the Barbican Centre in London; the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; Penn Live Arts in Philadelphia; the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and the 92nd Street Y in New York City.

During the fall of 2022, Sō Percussion began 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 such as Pan in Motion and Castle of Our Skins; its 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.

For more, visit [www.sopercussion.com](http://www.sopercussion.com).

**Caroline Shaw** is a New York-based musician, a vocalist, violinist, composer, and producer who performs in solo and collaborative projects. She was the youngest recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2013 for *Partita for 8 Voices*, written for the Grammy-winning *Roomful of Teeth*, of which she is a member. Recent commissions include new works for Renée Fleming with Inon Barnatan, Dawn Upshaw with Sō Percussion and Gil Kalish, Seattle Symphony, Anne Sofie von Otter with Philharmonia Baroque, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Juilliard 415, the Orchestra of St. Luke's with John Lithgow, the Dover Quartet, TENET, *The Crossing*, the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, the Calidore Quartet, Brooklyn Rider, the Baltimore Symphony, and *Roomful of Teeth* with A Far Cry. Shaw's film scores include Erica Fae's *To Keep the Light* and Josephine Decker's *Madeline's Madeline* as well as the upcoming short *8th Year of the Emergency* by Maureen Towey. She has produced for Kanye West (*The Life of Pablo; Ye*) and Nas (*NASIR*), and has contributed to records by The National and by Arcade Fire's Richard Reed Parry. Once she "got to sing in three part harmony with Sara Bareilles and Ben Folds at the Kennedy Center, and that was pretty much the bees' knees and elbows!" Shaw has studied at Rice, Yale, and Princeton; currently teaches at NYU; and is a Creative Associate at the Juilliard School. She has held residencies at Dumbarton Oaks, the Banff Centre, Music on Main, and the Vail Dance Festival. Shaw loves the color yellow, otters, Beethoven's Opus 74, Mozart operas, Kinhaven, the smell of rosemary, and the sound of a janky mandolin.

**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 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 Kathy Hochul 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  
The Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University

The Amphion Foundation

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.

*Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part*

Sō Percussion and Caroline Shaw

To the Sky

Lyrics by Anne Steele  
(from *The Sacred Harp* hymnal, 1760)

So fades the lovely blooming flow'r  
Frail solace of an hour  
So soon our transient comforts fly  
And pleasure blooms to die

Is there no kind, no healing art  
To soothe my anguished heart  
Spirit of grace be ever nigh  
Thy comforts not to die

Let gentle patience smile on pain  
Till hope revives again  
Hope wipes the tear from sorrow's eye  
And faith points to the sky

**The Flood is Following Me**

Lyrics by James Joyce  
from *Ulysses* (1922)  
and Caroline Shaw  
Rhythm begins, you see. I hear.

The flood is following me  
The flood is following me

And it's almost a chorus but  
Probably still a verse  
Spins around

The flood is following me  
The flood is following me

**Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part**

Lyrics by Caroline Shaw  
every angle has its fabled  
tangent tied behind the backs of  
folded hours found about the  
rounded corners  
counted towards what never  
quite arrived in time  
an asymptote  
a rhyme  
unfurled and  
further curling  
further finding  
cursive foiling  
wrapped around  
this mortal coil  
let the soil  
let the soil  
let the soil  
let the soil  
let the soil play its simple part

Do you ever think of me?  
I hope that you are well.

lyrically we seem to be  
sympatically derived from  
integers insistent on a  
keen resistance  
pen in hand you handed me  
your altogether pen in hand  
you handed me your further  
curling further finding cursive  
foiling wrapped around this mortal  
coil let the soil let the soil let  
the soil let the soil the  
soil the soil the soil the soil  
l e t t h e s o i l let the soil  
play its simple part.

Do you ever think of me?  
I hope that you are well

**Long Ago We Counted**

Lyrics by Caroline Shaw

Ago, ago, ago

Time until

Ago, ago, ago

Hours fill

Long ago we counted

One, two, three, four, five, six

Ago, ago, ago, ago, ago

Hours find

Ago, ago, ago, ago, ago

Fit the line

Long ago we . . .

One, three

Until, until, until

Side by side

Until, until, until

By and by

Again, again, again

Long ago we . . .

One

**A Gradual Dazzle**

Lyrics by Anne Carson

from *Hopper: Confessions*

“Room in Brooklyn”

published in *Men in the Off Hours* (2000)

This

slow

day

moves

Along the room

I

hear

its

axles

go

A gradual dazzle

upon

the ceiling

Gives me that

racy

bluishyellow

feeling

As hours

blow

the wide

way

Down my afternoon.

**Lay All Your Love On Me**

Lyrics by Benny Anderson

and Bjorn Ulvaeus (ABBA)

Don't go wasting your emotion

Lay all your love on me

Don't go sharing your devotion

Lay all your love on me

**Cast the Bells in Sand**

Lyrics by Josh Quillen

Tolling are the versions of  
Slight versions of the same  
Varied similarities

Cast the bells in the sand  
Cast the bells in the sand  
Cast the bells in the sand

A singular voice, alone  
Is its own

**Some Bright Morning**

Lyrics by Albert E. Brumley

from "I'll Fly Away" (1929)

Some bright morning  
When this life is over  
I'll fly away  
To that home on that  
celestial shore  
I'll fly away

When the shadows  
of this life are over,  
I'll...  
Oh glory  
Oh morning

When I die  
Hallelujah by and by  
I'll fly away

**A Veil Awake Upon the Waves**

Lyrics by James Joyce

from *Ulysses* (1922)

Did not : no, no:

All is lost now

A veil awake upon the waves

Wait while you wait.

**Other Song**

Lyrics by Caroline Shaw

Find where you go  
Behind the glare  
Is what I know  
The melody climbs higher

The song is in the fold  
The harmony is cold  
What's old is new  
Is ever, ever told

I go, I go...

I go where you are  
I know there is no  
Assigned melody

The song is in the fold  
The harmony is cold  
What's old is new is old  
is ever, ever told

The detail...

Find the line  
Find the line

I go where you go