



Lawrence Sumulong

Sunday, February 22, 2026, 3pm
Zellerbach Playhouse

Canto Ostinato

An AMOC* & Sandbox Percussion Co-Production

A work by Simeon ten Holt

Matthew Aucoin, *piano*

Conor Hanick, *piano*

Sandbox Percussion

Jonny Allen

Victor Caccese

Ian Rosenbaum

Terry Sweeney

*This evening's performance will last approximately 75 minutes
and be performed without intermission.*

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Simeon ten Holt's *Canto Ostinato* feels like a long-lost cousin to some of the most beloved of American Minimalist compositions, pieces like Steve Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians* and Terry Riley's *In C*. When you meet a previously unknown relative for the first time, you might be startled to discover mysterious family resemblances: physical and temperamental similarities like the shape of a nose, the sound of a laugh have a funny way of stretching across borders, across generations.

That's how listeners might feel when they encounter *Canto Ostinato*. This piece has the warmth, luminousness, and spaciousness of the best Minimalist compositions. It affords generous freedoms to the performers while also outlining an instantly recognizable musical world, a world of gently chiming pulses and profoundly satisfying shifts in harmony. The patiently changing light of this piece might evoke sacred music for some listeners; for others, it might seem to be inviting the listener into collective meditation. *Canto Ostinato*, so beloved in the country where it was written and first performed, deserves to become equally beloved around the world.

—Matthew Aucoin

On the AMOC* Sandbox Collaboration

It seems appropriate that the centripetal pull of *Canto Ostinato*, drawing in performers

and listeners alike, has also pulled together the American Modern Opera Company (AMOC*) and Sandbox Percussion. In much the same way as *Canto Ostinato* shares a kindred likeness with American Minimalist classics, these two organizations performing this work have their own mutual affinity. They also have their own distinct strengths. For Sandbox, that would be its fluency with Minimalism, the genre that most thoroughly brought percussion forward from the back of the orchestra. This is the repertoire that Sandbox cut its teeth on—a first language of sorts. To complement that, AMOC* brings a fluency with long-form artistic storytelling. *Canto Ostinato* may not be an opera in the conventional sense, but it is an evening-length journey with an epic's potential for arc and emotion.

What bonds these two organizations is a common bedrock of founding principles: both AMOC* and Sandbox are expressions of the people and relationships they comprise. This prioritization of people allowed the development process to feel less like rehearsal and more like a celebration—and *Canto Ostinato* was the perfect soundtrack for this celebration. More than anything, this is what is being shared in the AMOC* Sandbox collaboration on *Canto Ostinato*: the ecstatic feeling of gratitude to be making music together.

—Jonny Allen

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Matthew Aucoin is an American composer, conductor, and writer, and a 2018 MacArthur Fellow. He is a co-founder of the pathbreaking American Modern Opera Company (AMOC*), and was the Los Angeles Opera's Artist in Residence from 2016 to 2020.

As a composer, Aucoin is committed to expanding the possibilities of opera as a

genre. His own operas, which include *Eurydice* and *Crossing*, have been produced at the Metropolitan Opera, the Los Angeles Opera, the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Boston Lyric Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Canadian Opera Company, among others. The Metropolitan Opera's recording of *Eurydice* was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2023.



Matthew Aucoin

Aucoin's most recent work of music-theater, *Music for New Bodies*, is a collaboration with the legendary director Peter Sellars based on the poetry of Jorie Graham. In the summer of 2025, Aucoin conducted *Music for New Bodies* both at Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall, as part of AMOC's Lincoln Center festival, and at Tanglewood. In the fall of 2025, Aucoin conducted the work's West Coast premiere at Seattle's Meany Center. Previously, the work was also presented in Houston (co-presented by DACAMERA and Rice University's Shepherd School of Music) and the Aspen Music Festival.

Aucoin's orchestral and chamber music has been performed, commissioned, and recorded by such leading artists and ensembles as Yo-Yo Ma, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the BBC Scottish Symphony, Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, pianists Conor



Laure Desberg

Conor Hanick

Hanick and Kirill Gerstein, the Brentano Quartet, and singers including Julia Bullock, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Erin Morley, Davóne Tines, Danielle de Niese, Paul Appleby.

In 2023, the MET Orchestra, conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin, featured Aucoin's orchestral work *Heath* on its first European tour in several decades. Aucoin has also received commissions from Carnegie Hall, the Ojai Music Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, the La Jolla Chamber Music Society, Chicago's Symphony Center, the Gilmore Keyboard Festival, and other leading musical organizations.

His recent conducting engagements include appearances with the Los Angeles Opera, the Chicago Symphony, the Santa Fe Opera, the Houston Grand Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Salzburg's Mozarteum Orchestra, the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, the Rome Opera Orchestra, and many other acclaimed ensembles.

Aucoin's book about opera, *The Impossible Art: Adventures in Opera*, was published in 2021 by Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. He is currently Visiting Professor of Composition and Conducting at Boston University. Aucoin has also taught at Harvard University and the Juilliard School, and is a regular contributor to leading publications such as the *New York Review of Books* and *The Atlantic*.

Pianist **Conor Hanick** is regarded as one of his generation's most inquisitive interpreters of music new and old, whose "technical refinement, color, crispness and wondrous variety of articulation benefit works by any master" (*New York Times*). Hanick's playing, "a revelation of clarity and bite," recalled to the *Times*' Anthony Tommasini a "young Peter Serkin," and his performance of John Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* was, according to *Times*' critic David Allan, "the best instrumental concert I have seen all year," praise echoed by the *Boston Globe*, which named the performance "Best Solo Recital" of 2019.

Hanick has recently performed with the San Francisco Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Alabama Symphony, Orchestra Iowa, and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and been presented by the Gilmore Festival, New York Philharmonic, Elbphilharmonie, De Singel, Centre Pompidou, Caramoor, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Park Avenue Armory, and the Ojai Festival, where in 2022 with AMOC* (American Modern Opera Company) he served as the festival's artistic director. A fierce advocate for the music of today, and "the soloist of choice for such thorny works" (*New York Times*), Hanick has premiered more than 200 pieces and collaborated with composers both emerging and iconic; among them, Hanick has worked with Pierre Boulez, Kaija Saariaho, Steve Reich, Tania León, and Charles Wuorinen, in addition to the leading composers of his generation,

including Nico Muhly, Caroline Shaw, Tyshawn Sorey, inti figgis-vizueta, Chris Cerrone, Anthony Cheung, and Samuel Carl Adams, whose piano concerto *No Such Spring* he premiered in 2023 with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony.

During the 2025–26 season, Hanick presents solo and chamber recitals in the US and Europe, including recitals presented by Other Minds, Da Camera, the Kaufman Center, Ojai Festival, and the Barbican Centre. Hanick appears with Orchestra Iowa in Bartók's Third Piano Concerto and the BBC Philharmonic for the UK premiere of John Adams' *No Such Spring*, and tours *From Ordinary Things*, his trio project with cellist Seth Parker Woods and soprano Julia Bullock. Additional collaborations with Sandbox Percussion, cellist Jay Campbell, and Ensemble New SRQ feature the premiere of Marcos Balter's *Three Enigmas* for cello, piano, and electronics and a 50th anniversary performance of Steve Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians*.

Since 2014, Hanick has been a faculty artist at the Music Academy of the West and in 2018, he became the director of its solo piano program. He has given lectures and master classes in Asia, Europe, and throughout the US, including at Northwestern University, the New England Conservatory, UCLA, University of Washington, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and University of Iowa. He is a member of the keyboard and chamber music faculty of the Juilliard School, Mannes College, and the CUNY Graduate Center. A Yamaha Artist, Hanick is a graduate of Northwestern University and the Juilliard School. He lives in the Hudson Valley.

The "exhilarating" (*The New York Times*) and "utterly mesmerizing" (*The Guardian*) Grammy-nominated **Sandbox Percussion** champions living composers through its unwavering dedication to contemporary



Sandbox Percussion

chamber music. In 2011, Jonathan Allen, Victor Caccese, Ian Rosenbaum, and Terry Sweeney were brought together by their interest in expanding the percussion repertoire. Today, they are established leaders in contemporary music for percussion, engaging a wider audience for classical music through collaborations with leading composers and artists.

In 2025, Sandbox Percussion made its debut on NPR's *Tiny Desk* with a genre-defying program of pieces by Andy Akiho and Viet Cuong; and, in 2024, the group recorded percussion for the feature film *The Wild Robot* (DreamWorks). Sandbox Percussion is the first percussion ensemble to receive the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant; at the 2024 ceremony, the musicians performed "Pillar V," from *Seven Pillars*, Akiho's 2021 suite for percussion quartet, which the *New York Times* called "as pure as music gets." It was nominated for two Grammy Awards and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

Building on that success, Sandbox Percussion and Akiho embark on a project in

2025–26 to create a new work with Akiho joining on steelpan; "Pentalateral I," the first completed movement, is available now as a single. Throughout the season, the quintet continues to create and record the rest of the piece, giving premieres of individual movements in select venues.

Sandbox Percussion also continues to champion *Re(new)al*, Cuong's green-energy and environment-themed 2017 concerto for percussion quartet. The artists reunite for the world premiere of a new work by Cuong to be performed with the Albany Symphony, which originally commissioned and premiered *Re(new)al*.

Another season highlight is the collaboration with violinist Kristin Lee, the founder and artistic director of Seattle's Emerald City Music, where Sandbox Percussion is ensemble in residence this season. Together, they present a Vivian Fung world premiere and the Pacific Northwest premiere of recent works by Joan Tower and Gabriella Smith. Lee joins Sandbox Percussion again at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center for *Sonic Spectrum IV*, a program that in-

cludes Lou Harrison's Concerto for Violin with Percussion Orchestra.

Over the season, Sandbox Percussion performs Simeon ten Holt's minimalist work *Canto Ostinato*. The group's arrangement for percussion quartet and two pianos was performed last summer at Lincoln Center *Summer for the City*. A new recording by the group, Erik Hall, and Metropolis Ensemble is scheduled for release in spring 2026 on the Western Vinyl label. At Duke University, Sandbox Percussion and the Tyshawn Sorey Trio present *Max Roach at 100*, a tribute to the influential jazz drummer. At Stanford Live, Sandbox Percussion joins the choir The Crossing for *You Are Who I Love*, the last work by the late Harold Meltzer, set to Aracelis Girmay's poem about the undocumented immigrant experience in the US.

The group's latest album is the three-time Grammy-nominated *Don't Look Down* (Pentatone, 2025), featuring music by Christopher Cerrone. Other recent releases include *BLOOM*, with music by Michael Torke (Ecstatic Records, 2024); and *Past Life/Lifeline*, with music by Ellis Ludwig-Leone (Better Company Records, 2024).

Sandbox Percussion holds the positions of ensemble in residence and percussion faculty at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and at The New School's College of Performing Arts, where the group has created a curriculum with entrepreneurship and chamber music at its core. The 2025–26 season is the group's second year on faculty at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. Sandbox Percussion endorses Pearl/Adams musical instruments, Zildjian cymbals, Vic Firth sticks and mallets, Remo drumheads, and Black Swamp accessories. sandboxpercussion.com.

The American Modern Opera Company (AMOC*) is a company of creators that commissions and produces bold new work in music, dance, and opera. Founded in 2017 by composer Matthew Aucoin and director and producer Zack Winokur, AMOC* (American Modern Opera Company) comprises 17 of today's most sought-after composers, choreographers, directors, vocalists, instrumentalists, dancers, writers, and producers. These artists are united by their commitment to collective authorship through long-term generative relationships. AMOC* supports these creators with unique resources to develop their work, maintains a robust national and international touring schedule, and upholds a rigorously equitable and artist-led development model. AMOC* is deeply committed to making its performances financially accessible.

AMOC* has developed and premiered more than 20 new productions in its eight seasons as a company. In June and July 2025, the company co-produced the Run AMOC* Festival at Lincoln Center, which featured more than 100 artists in 10 New York premieres across 12 productions. Past partners include 92nd Street Y, American Repertory Theater, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Brown Arts Institute, DACAMERA (Houston), Harvard University, La MaMa, Park Avenue Armory, Stanford Live, and Yale University. AMOC* has appeared internationally at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, Centre Pompidou (Paris), de Singel (Brussels), Elbphilharmonie (Hamburg), and Erholungshaus (Leverkusen). In 2022, AMOC* served as Music Director for the 75th Ojai Music Festival.