

the society for  
**ethnomusicology**

*presents*

The 2020 **SEM Orchestra** Series of Virtual Performances  
Saturday October 24, 2020 8:00-10:00PM  
**SEM Orchestra Virtual Reality Platform**

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**PROGRAM**

Sonic Meditations XVI

Pauline Oliveros (1932-2016)

A remote musical performance  
led by Scott Currie

Misterioso

Thelonious Monk (1917-1982)  
arr. Michael Frishkopf

Jason Mitchell, saxophone (soloist)  
Michael Frishkopf, keyboard, bass (Roli), and electric guitar (solo)

Layered Piece

SEM Orchestra  
arr. Katelyn Best

Katelyn Best, MIDI keyboard controller  
Luis Ramirez, slide whistle  
Olga Zaitseva-Herz, electric violin/voice  
Di Zhang, yangqin

Sounds of Quarantine

SEM Orchestra  
arr. Katelyn Best

*featuring*

“Sounds of Quarantine in House 421” by Miriam Gerberg  
“Song for Casey” by Di Zhang and Kenny Kwan

Miriam Gerberg, piano/qanun/voice  
Mia Gormandy-Benjamin, soundscape  
Kenny Kwan, piano  
Olga Zaitseva-Herz, soundscape  
Di Zhang, yangqin

Improvisational Framework Piece

SEM Orchestra  
arr. Katelyn Best

Alexandra Baladina, bendir  
Katelyn Best, MIDI keyboard controller  
David Cobb, NS Omni Bass NXTa  
Alia O’Brien, synthesizer

John Vallier, drums/keyboard  
Olga Zaitseva-Herz, electric violin/voice  
Di Zhang, yangqin

Les Moutons de Panurge

Frederic Rzewski (1938- )  
arr. Michael Frishkopf  
and Katelyn Best

Michael Frishkopf, Roli

Collage Piece

SEM Orchestra  
arr. Katelyn Best

*featuring*  
“Bad Rast” by Tugrul Ozer  
“E-IsoFusion 1,” “Under the Bridge,” and “Skyping with Olga”  
by the Trancecultural Orchestra

Stacey Bliss, gong/mallets/water bowl  
Donna Dawson, theremin/hang drum/soundscape  
Michael Frishkopf, Roli  
Mia Gormandy-Benjamin, bored tenor steelpan  
Shumaila Hemani, soundscape  
Tugrul Ozer, ney  
Allison Sokil, Moog Pad  
John Vallier, archival recordings  
(sampled voices of Harold Courlander, A.P. Elkin, and Harry Smith)  
Olga Zaitseva-Herz, soundscape

Supplication (mannat)

Shumaila Hemani

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**SEM Orchestra 2020 Participants:**

Co-directors (organizers): Katelyn Best, Scott Currie, and Michael Frishkopf

Arrangers and Producers: Katelyn Best and Michael Frishkopf

Performers:

Alexandra Baladina, Ionian University

Katelyn Best (<https://katelynebest.wixsite.com/musicology/music>)

Stacey Bliss, University of Regina ([www.blissresearch.org](http://www.blissresearch.org))

David Cobb, Palm Beach State College ([treespeechmusic.com](http://treespeechmusic.com))

Donna Dawson, University of Alberta (<https://tranceculturalorchestra.bandcamp.com/>)

Michael Frishkopf, University of Alberta ([frishkopf.org](http://frishkopf.org))

Miriam Gerberg, Minnesota Global Arts Institute and Hamline University

(<https://soundcloud.com/mgerberg>)

Mia Gormandy-Benjamin, University of Trinidad and Tobago (<http://www.miagormandy.com/>)

Shumaila Hemani (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCC30tcmQCvj8gLrXOkYQzUg>)  
Jason Mitchell, Florida State University  
Alia O'Brien, University of Toronto ([www.aliaobrien.com](http://www.aliaobrien.com))  
Tugrul Ozer, University of Alberta (<https://soundcloud.com/tu-rul-zer-1>)  
Luis Ramirez, York University ([www.cutza.xyz](http://www.cutza.xyz))  
The TranceCultural Orchestra (TCO), Edmonton/Alberta ([bit.ly/trancetrans](http://bit.ly/trancetrans))  
John Vallier, University of Washington (<https://www.instagram.com/archivalrecords>)  
Olga Zaitseva-Herz, University of Alberta (<http://www.zaitsa.com/>)  
Di Zhang (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC92dMx5fgF3fIDFr2AEbWiQ/videos>)

For more information about the SEM Orchestra visit our webpage at  
<https://semorchestra.wixsite.com/sem-o> or [https://www.ethnomusicology.org/page/Conf\\_SEMO](https://www.ethnomusicology.org/page/Conf_SEMO).  
Thank you.

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## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Sonic Meditations XVI**

Sonic Meditations are an attempt to return the control of sound to the individual alone, and within groups especially for humanitarian purposes, specifically healing.... [T]he meditations are available to anyone who wishes to participate regardless, or in spite, of musical training. All that is required is a willing commitment to the given conditions. Sound making during the meditations is primarily vocal, sometimes hand clapping or other body sounds, sometimes using sound producing objects and instruments. (Oliveros 1974)

**Misterioso** is an innovative blues-based composition by Thelonious Monk, probably dating from the mid-1940s. In the historic recording with vibraphonist Milt Jackson (Blue Note, 1948), two deceptively simple parallel sequences of sixths - on piano and vibes - provide the framework for some of the most remarkable rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic interactions in jazz history.

The **Layered Piece** combines a series of improvisations created based on a foundational track consisting of seven layers of synthesized pads centered around D with at times the addition of the fifth. The text, provided by Olga Zaitseva-Herz, is from the book of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany and consists of the following:

*Eine Zensur findet nicht statt.*

*Alle Menschen sind vor dem Gesetz gleich.*

*Niemand darf wegen seines Geschlechtes, seiner Abstammung, seiner Rasse, seiner Sprache, seiner Heimat und Herkunft, seines Glaubens, seiner religiösen oder politischen Anschauungen benachteiligt oder bevorzugt werden. Niemand darf wegen seiner Behinderung benachteiligt werden.*

*Alle Menschen sind vor dem Gesetz gleich.*

*Politisch Verfolgte genießen Asylrecht.*

*Eine Zensur findet nicht statt.*

There shall be no censorship.

All persons shall be equal before the law.

No person shall be favoured or disfavoured because of sex, parentage, race, language, homeland and origin, faith or religious or political opinions. No person shall be disfavoured because of disability. All persons shall be equal before the law. Persons persecuted on political grounds shall have the right of asylum. There shall be no censorship.

**Sounds of Quarantine** begins with an audio clip taken from The Clockmakers' Museum in London in January of 2020 with the echoing sound of bells accompanied by crowds of people moving to and fro. From there, this piece moves into a different soundscape consisting of audio clips taken during different periods of quarantine—from the sound of construction and the birds in Germany to the whirring of helicopters flying around Santa Monica, CA during a George Floyd protest. This piece also includes the sound of a fly buzzing around Petroglyph National Monument as well as the vocalization of an infant. These clips are then woven around two compositions titled “Song for Casey” and “Sounds of Quarantine in House 412.” Combined, these compositions mixed with audio samples taken in 2020 represent different sonic moments and expressions during this time.

**Sounds of Quarantine in House 412** is a layered quilt made of sounds collected through field work examining an American musician's life under a house quarantine. Performances (piano, qanun and voice) and production by Miriam Gerberg with the assistance of her cat Ramone, a Samsung washing machine, the kitchen clock, Zoom and neighborhood crickets. The intention of the work is a birds-ear documentation of the soundscape in a select US household under the Quarantine of 2020. All quoted music is by Miriam Gerberg with the exception of a clip of her cover of *Laila* by Farid Al-Atrash. The recording runs 1:34

The **Improvisational Framework Piece** is based on a Dorian scale in the key of D and a 5/4 meter. The composition begins with a digitized marimba playing a repetitive arpeggio in 5/4. Weaving independent musical contributions together within the foundational track, this piece becomes a journey representative of the range of musical interpretation inspired by the melodic framework for the composition.

**Les Moutons de Panurge** is an open-instrumentation piece by American composer and pianist Frederic Rzewski. Dedicated to the Dutch conductor Frans Brüggen, Rzewski notes that the piece is composed “for any number of musicians playing melodic instruments and any number of nonmusicians playing anything.” The piece comprises a sequence of 65 eighth and quarter notes, played double forte. Musicians are instructed to play the first note, then the first two, then the first three, and so forth until they've played the entire sequence. After repeating the whole, they then begin subtracting notes from the beginning in the same manner, playing the last 64 notes, then the last 63 and so on until they play only the 65th, after which they improvise. Meanwhile the tempo accelerates. If players get lost, as human musicians invariably do, they are instructed to continue and not attempt to find their way “back to the fold”, resulting in a heterophonic texture. Non-musicians have their own instructions, enabling all to participate. Live performances are quite entertaining, but impossible via video conferencing. Instead we produced a complete score, from which a MIDI sequence was generated. Digital audio workstation (DAW) software was then used to render the sequence on different instruments and accelerate the tempo, as well as to introduce slight modifications in timing so as to generate the desired heterophony.

The **Collage Piece** is a virtual music collaboration based on recorded materials. From an audio clip taken in Jasper National Park and a recording from a home-gong studio to a sound bite of a solo steelpan rehearsal in Trinidad and excerpts from the UW Ethnomusicology Archives, this piece crosses time and space as a multitude of sonic moments become intertwined with one another.

**Supplication (mannat)** is based on recordings and soundscape compositions inspired by field-work conducted at the shrine of Sufi Mystic: Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai. The piece is set in ritualistic time and shares two dua or prayers; one that is held in the late evening after the recitation of Sur Sohni and another observed after azan at early dawn after the recitation of Sur Marvi. Both prayers are influenced by the folk characters Sohni and Marvi on which the poetry is based. Sufi Mystic Shah Latif's verses are arranged in Sur (chapters), each of which has a distinct theme. There are currently thirty chapters that are attributed to him.

*Sincere thanks to SEM Executive Director Stephen Stuempfle and to the participating musicians.*