

Sarah Saviet, violin

Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Music Center | Experimental Theater

<i>Clearest Clear</i> *	Aaron Mencher
<i>Prosthesis</i> *	Lyra Montoya
<i>to extreme taste</i> *	Myra Hinrichs
<i>Meditative Drones- An Improvisational Etude</i> *	Pauline Ng
<i>Travelogue: Surat -> Hat Yai, sul G</i> *	Stephen de Filippo
<i>A Coiled Form (2022)</i>	Bryn Harrison

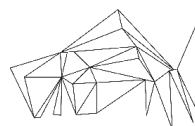
**world premiere*



SARAH SAVIET is a violinist based in Berlin and dedicated to the performance of contemporary music. She performs as a soloist and chamber musician and is a member of the Saviet/Houston Duo and Ensemble Mosaik.

Sarah's debut solo album *SPUN (Coviello Contemporary)* was recently nominated for the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik for new music. She has also released on *all that dust* and *another timbre*, and her recording of Liza Lim's violin concerto 'Speak, Be Silent,' with the Riot Ensemble on *HCR/NMC* records was selected as one of New Yorker Magazine's 'Best recordings of 2019.'

Recent performances include duo concerts at Ultraschall and AFEKT festivals, soloist with Klangforum Wien as part of Märzmusik in the Berliner Philharmonie, and the premiere of Rebecca Saunders and Enno Poppe's duo Taste at Witten Festival 2022. Sarah has held visiting artist positions in the composition departments of the University of the Arts Berlin, Huddersfield University, at Goldsmith University London with the Riot Ensemble, and at Harvard University with ELISION Ensemble. She has given workshops on contemporary violin technique at the Manhattan School of Music University of the Arts Berlin, Manhattan School of Music, and Darmstadt Akademie für Tonkunst, and held artist residencies at Aldeburgh Music with composers Lawrence Dunn, Jack Sheen, and artist Rowland Hill.



UC San Diego

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Department of Music

Aaron Mencher: *Clearest Clear*

Biography: Aaron Mencher writes “sophisticated and compelling” (Boston New Music Initiative) contemporary classical music. His practice explores the complex social relationships of music, art and technology. Recently, the Mivos Quartet premiered his piece “Articulate Particulate” for string quartet and generative score in collaboration with geologist Dr. Emily Chin. Additionally, his installation “Displacement” was recently presented at both Project [Blank] and UC San Diego. Previous collaborators include the St. Louis Symphony, Albany Symphony, Alarm Will Sound, violinist Patti Kilroy, cellist Dave Eggar, and many others. Aaron has also received recognition from organizations such as ASCAP, The American Modern Ensemble, The Boston New Music Initiative, NAFME, the European-American Musical Alliance, the American Prize, and the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra of New York. In addition, he has worked on a variety of dramatic projects. He was the sound designer for *Grippy Sock Vacation*, a new play written by Beth Hyland, which premiered at the 2023 Wagner New Play Festival. Aaron scored a documentary directed by Katie Schnell, and the short film *Maggephah* directed by Atlanta-based filmmaker Brad McGaughey. Aaron is currently a PhD student at the University of California San Diego. His teachers include Michelle Lou, Marcos Balter, Oscar Bettison, and Carolina Heredia.

Program Note: The title of this piece references multiple things. First, it is a pun on “the blackest black”—a proprietary pigment that is licensed solely for use by contentious artist Anish Kapoor. Second, it is a reference to a previous piece of mine titled *Ochres and Bones* whose title refers to the earliest sources of pigments for painting. Both pieces dabble in painterly metaphors as descriptions of timbre and musical form. In this piece, I continue exploring gradations of bow technique and finger technique to draw out clear, wispy timbres from the violin. At the same time, it still maintains connections to history through its classical form, a theme and variations, and the use of a violin as its medium just as high tech pigment like the blackest black always have some connection to ochres and bones of historical artistic practices.

Lyra Montoya: *Prosthesis*

Biography: Lyra Montoya is a woodwinds multi instrumentalist and composer. She began playing alto saxophone in elementary school, and then spread to the flute and clarinet instrument families in college. She completed a Bachelor of the Arts in Music from the University of Colorado, Boulder, as well as a Masters of Music in Contemporary Musical Arts from the New England Conservatory. She is currently a Ph.D student in music at UC San Diego in the integrative studies program.

Her work focuses on improvisation as a site of interpretation and embodiment in performance, and how one projects their personal aesthetics and sensibilities into the performance. Composition serves as a vehicle for exploring specific sites and approaches within improvisation, and aims to invite the performers and observers alike to consider how they engage with music and art.

Program Note: A brief consideration on what counts as a prosthetic often begins with prosthetic limbs that an amputee may have to restore facility in motion. Further consideration might yield mobility aids such as a wheelchair, cane, brace, or crutches as similar prosthetics that assist the body in locomotion, as their intended function to provide mobility that the body alone is incapable of demonstrates the same telos as that of prosthetic limbs even though these mobility aids do not seek to serve an identical function as a limb. Further contemplation may reveal a similar nature in how items such as glasses and watches are admissible as prosthetics in assisting with human faculty, but I will hazard an even stronger categorization: any externality can become a prosthetic through enough time and experience interfacing with the body. There is no needed function for a prosthesis, and purely cosmetic elements such as piercings become extensions of the body the same as a prosthetic limb does, albeit with a completely different function.

The event of a musical performance involves motion, exertion, and activity from the bodies of the performers. Prosthesis specifically explores the interfacing between the instrument and the body of the performer. This piece serves as a guided improvisation in which the performer reveals their personal and specific physicality

Lyra Montoya, program note, continued

and exertion required when playing their instrument, in which the facility with the instrument demonstrates an emergent connection between the performer and an externality. Through time, experience, and endless practice, the instrument slowly becomes an extension of the body that the performer understands how to use. In my mind, the instrument is a part of the body during performance and practice, and has specific possibility and ability unique from the anatomical boundary we so often confine our consideration of the body to.

Myra Hinrichs: *to extreme taste*

Biography: Myra Hinrichs, violinist, is currently enrolled at the University of California San Diego in the doctoral program. Before that she lived and worked in Chicago after graduating from the Oberlin College and Conservatory and the Civic Orchestra training program. In performance, she is a member of Chartreuse, a string trio devoted to performing the music of living composers from around the world. This year Chartreuse is collaborating on new pieces with composers Pablo Chin and Bergrún Snœbjörnsdóttir. Myra appears with many other ensembles including 3+1 Quartet, Mucca Pazza, the Morton Feldman Chamber Players, and a.pe.ri.od.ic.

Program note: I have been a bit obsessed with the physical sensations of playing the violin for the past couple of years. This piece is an exploration of different kinds of aural and tactile sensations and finding nice moments in the midst of change, i.e. trying to find something that “feels good.”

Pauline Ng: *Meditative Drones- An Improvisational Etude*

Biography: A composer, violinist, and educator from Hong Kong, Pauline Ng received her Master of Music in Composition from the University of Michigan and Bachelor of Music from the Oberlin Conservatory with double majors in Composition and Violin Performance. Ng has served as the Young Composer in Residence for the Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings and performed with the International Contemporary Ensemble at the Ojai Music Festival. Her works have also been performed at the Midwest Composers Symposium and in various Honors Recitals at the Oberlin Conservatory. Committed to advancing representation and education in the performing arts, she co-founded the SA'OAXACA Strings International Music Festival with the Amatista Quartet under the Performing Arts EXCELerator entrepreneurial fellowship program in 2019. Pauline is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Composition at the University of California San Diego, studying with Karola Obermüller.

Program Note: *Meditative Drones* is an improvisational étude for solo violin, designed to refine the performer's sensitivity to just intonation through playing double stops and sustaining an open string drone (e.g. D, tuned to ~293.7 Hz).

Études, originally conceived as practice exercises for enhancing technical proficiency, have their roots in the Latin words “studium” (n. = eagerness, dedication) and “studere” (v. = to be diligent). These terms carry connotations that suggest the instrumentalist possesses a strong desire and commitment to diligent practice. In other words, any composition aimed at fostering and nurturing a musician's technical precision and interpretive skills could be categorized as an étude.

In this piece, each musical phrase begins and ends on the drone, in which the open string drone serves a dual role – actively anchoring the pitch and providing a reference for the tonal center — creating a sonic foundation that permeates the piece. As the violinist uses a single finger to explore the various nuances of pitch and harmony on one string, supported by the constant drone, the minimal and at times microscopic movements encourage deep listening. This stillness and meditative quality are amplified by the application of slow, elongated bow strokes that resonate with the pace of the violinist's breathing, in addition to keeping the dynamic range of the piece softly between pianississimo and mezzo-piano, with bow pressure subtly adjusted to explore the voicing of the double stops. While the objective of learning and performing this étude is to enhance one's confidence in tuning and intonation, it also encourages mindful playing and active engagement of bodily sensations that help set the stage and atmosphere of creating a meditative experience for both the performer and listener.

Stephen de Filippo: *Travelogue: Surat -> Hat Yai, sul G*

Biography: My name is Stephen de Filippo, and I am a composer and performer from Wardandi country in the remote southwest corner of Australia. While my primary medium is score-based concert music, in recent years, it has evolved into a more electro-acoustic form. My work emphasizes contemporary performance techniques, detailed musical notation, and the incorporation of dense, textured soundscapes centered on field recordings, environmental sounds, and live electronics. Thematically, my music often extends from my own experiences, with recent works reflecting on concepts like travel, place, and displacement—my transience, lack of grounding, and disconnection to place since leaving my home in Australia; love, its beauty, and its impermanence; and questions of identity, pondering what it truly means to be Australian.

In 2023, I was a visiting research fellow at Harvard University's Department of Music, supported by Harvard's Institute of Australian Studies and the Ian Potter Cultural Trust. Here, I studied how Australian classical music is born out of a history of cultural cringe—an inherent cultural inferiority complex felt by Australians by nature of being a British colonial state—and how the music and biography of composer Peter Sculthorpe reflects this colonial anxiety. Additionally, I was an artist-in-residence at the Kimmel Harding Nelson Foundation Center for the Arts, and presented works at Harvard's ArtLab, the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, and the Manhattan International Composers Conference.

2024 sees me composing new works: my first string quartet titled "is my love just a fraught series of momentary alignments?", a new piece for Mexico's Low Frequency Trio, this work for Sarah Saviet, and an EP of recordings extending from this project. I also saw the US premiere of my open woodwind + electronics work "Spectral Breathing Apparatus" at the 2024 CampGround Festival in Florida, featuring flautist Julianna Eidle. And, I am currently in the process of devising a new collaborative project with my friend, composer & pianist Anthony R. Green, which explores themes of queer belonging and displacement.

For more information, please visit: www.stephendefilippo.com

Program Note: The foundation of this work emerged after I undertook a year-long fellowship at Harvard University in 2023. After its conclusion, I felt mentally and emotionally exhausted, so I wanted to take the opportunity, as I was relocating between cities, to go somewhere where I felt alleviated from any kind of academic encumbrances.

On my route back to Australia, I spent over two months travelling through Thailand, from its northernmost point, along the Malay Peninsula, through the Gulf of Thailand and to the borders of Thailand and Malaysia. Passing through Chiang Mai, Prachuap Kiri Khan, Surat, Koh Samui, Hat Yai, and George Town, I crossed over 1150 miles by train and ferry.

Throughout this journey, I recorded the ambient sounds of travel using contact microphones, capturing the rattling interior of train cabins, the rhythmic droning of the ferry, and various other contact points of these transport modes. Contact microphones have been utilized to capture the material sound of trains and ferries, which are then processed into soundscapes that carry the drones, movements, and rhythms experienced during long-distance travel – the continuous drone that accompanies travel. These recordings, processed and refined, now constitute a fixed-media component that accompanies Sarah's performance.

Sarah mimics this texture, she embeds herself in this sound of travel to create a conglomerate that slowly shifts and transforms. She performs entirely on the G string, exploring the different qualities of sound that can be produced within this restriction — grainy pitchless bowing, hints of open string, high harmonics, scraping, and other textural sounds.

The arrival point is the Phra Maha Chedi Tripob Trimongkol, an Art Deco inspired stupa made from coiled stainless steel. Within the structure are hundreds of little bells that tinkle in the breeze. The final recordings I have included were taken from within the Chedi—the gentle tinkling of the small bells as they sway in the wind, the sound of distant birds, plus the bleed of some new age music that was being listened to by the custodian.

This work intersects documentation, a travel journal, field recording, and composition. This is not an exotification of Thailand or Thai culture, but uses this travelling experience to capture and aestheticise the sonic accompaniment that follows us during travel.

A Coiled Form (shorter version) by Bryn Harrison

Bryn Harrison (b.1969) is a composer and Professor in Composition at the University of Huddersfield from where he obtained a doctorate in composition in 2007. He has developed a close working relationship with ensembles such as Plus-Minus, Asamisimasa, Elision, Exaudi, Apartment House, Bozzini Quartet, Wet Ink as well as with soloists such as Philip Thomas, Mark Knoop and Aisha Orazbayeva. In addition, his pieces have been performed by many other established ensembles such as Ensemble Recherche, Klangforum Wien, the London Sinfonietta, the London Symphony Orchestra, with notable performances and radio broadcasts from international festivals across the world.

As a composer, he has a long-held fascination with notions of musical time. Throughout his twenties and early thirties, he produced a steady output of solo and ensemble works, and in the process, developed an individual approach to dealing with time as a circular and repeating entity. Many of his subsequent works such as *Surface Forms (repeating)* (2009) operate at a speed and density that cannot be easily or immediately apprehended; they gradually draw the listener into an experience of the passage of time. More recently, he has continued to work with cyclical structures in a series of compositions of long duration that includes the 45-minute ensemble works *Repetitions in Extended Time* (2008) and *Receiving the Approaching Memory* (2014), and the 76-minute solo piano piece *Vessels* (2013). Over the past three years, his compositional research has focussed upon the ways in which memory operates in music. His hour-long *Piano Quintet* (2017) draws on a world of vanishings, recollections, apprehensions and remembrances. More recent works, such as *Dead Time* (2019), consider the use of highly-repetitive digital loops within the context of live instrumental settings.

He has co-authored two books: *Overcoming Form: Reflections on Immersive Listening*, (with Richard Glover) University of Huddersfield Press, 2013 and, with Jennie Gottschalk and Richard Glover; *Being Time: Case Studies in Musical Temporality*, Bloomsbury 2018. Bryn Harrison is a recipient of the prestigious Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award for Composers.

A Coiled Form

The composition was jointly commissioned by Riot Ensemble, of which Saviet is a member, and by the von Siemens Music Foundation; the original commission was for a five-minute piece but Harrison and Saviet discussed ways in which it might vary in length to allow for longer performances; in the draft of the original score, the number of repetitions was specified but they decided to leave these open and flexible, introducing a more organic element to the piece. At its premiere given by Saviet at Wigmore Hall, London, the piece was about twenty minutes long; for a Berlin concert, she prepared a version almost forty minutes long. The fifty-minute recorded version is credited as “Extended version (2022)” by Sarah Saviet; Harrison has described it as “a beautifully elegant version that navigates the listener through an unpredictable labyrinth of repeated passages...” It is impossible to disagree with that description although, for some listeners, it may be better to underplay the role of repetition in the piece; suffice to say that the music never gets tiresomely repetitive. On this showing, how long can it be until Sarah Saviet is regarded as a composer as well as a violinist?

(By John Eyles, From *All About Jazz*, January 25, 2023)

Audience members are reminded to please silence all phones and noise-generating devices before the performance. As a matter of courtesy and copyright law, no unauthorized recording or photography is allowed in the hall. UC San Diego is a non-smoking campus.

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