

LEFT  
COAST  
CHAMBER  
ENSEMBLE



SEASON 29

# Long Distance Call

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |        |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Ryan Suleiman       | <i>The Robin for Distanced</i> Soprano, Piccolo, Cello, Piano WORLD PREMIERE<br><b>Stacey Pelinka</b> piccolo<br><b>Leighton Fong</b> cello<br><b>Allegra Chapman</b> piano<br><b>Nikki Einfeld</b> soprano                                                        | 10 min |
| Laura Rose Schwartz | <i>Parse for Distanced</i> Soprano, Flute, Cello, Piano WORLD PREMIERE<br><b>Stacey Pelinka</b> piccolo<br><b>Leighton Fong</b> cello<br><b>Allegra Chapman</b> piano<br><b>Nikki Einfeld</b> soprano                                                              | 10 min |
| Olivier Messiaen    | <i>Le Merle noir</i> for Flute and Piano<br><b>Stacey Pelinka</b> piccolo<br><b>Allegra Chapman</b> piano                                                                                                                                                          | 7 min  |
| Paul McCartney      | <i>Blackbird</i><br><b>Leighton Fong</b> cello<br><b>Nikki Einfeld</b> soprano                                                                                                                                                                                     | 3 min  |
| Louise Farrenc      | Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano, Op. 45<br>I. Allegro deciso - Più moderato ed espressivo<br>II. Andante<br>III. Scherzo. Vivace - Poco più sostenuto<br>IV. Presto<br><b>Stacey Pelinka</b> piccolo<br><b>Leighton Fong</b> cello<br><b>Allegra Chapman</b> piano | 25 min |

Sunday October 24th, 2021, 5:00PM  
virtual concert broadcast from San Francisco

# notes and biographies

## Ryan Suleiman

*The Robin* (2020)

Gibran's "The Robin" for me in 2020 represents a yearning for peace while in a state of isolation and anxiety. This feeling is also reflected in the singer's situation. The piece, created with social-distancing measures in mind, is written such that the singer is not only physically isolated from her instrumentalist colleagues, but also musically. She has to sing, then wait for a reaction. During the pandemic, we want to gather together, but can't. In Gibran's robin we find beauty, peace, and tranquility. The robin lives gracefully and in the moment. Imagining this robin as I composed has been a kind of balm. I hope it is for you, too.

Gibran, like my father, emigrated to the United States from Lebanon. My father grew up in Beirut, and I became especially motivated to work with Gibran's poetry after Beirut's devastating explosion, which compounded the numerous crises in that country. Half of performance royalties will be donated to Islamic Relief USA's aid efforts in Lebanon.

- Ryan Suleiman

Ryan Suleiman was born to Lebanese and Mid-Western parents in California. His music engages with dreaming, the natural world, and the understated beauty of everyday life. His one-act chamber opera, *Moon, Bride, Dogs*, was described by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as "a gem" with "an aesthetic that is at once so strange and so accessible." While his artistic interests vary, he seeks ways of conveying the simultaneity of beauty and dread that characterizes our times. This is the subject of his Piano Concerto (2020) and an interview series called "Reflections on Music and Nature," available on YouTube.

Suleiman is a three-time Finalist of the ASCAP Young Composer Awards and two-time winner of the FeNAM Student Composers Competition. His music has been performed at festivals, including SICPP (Boston), June in Buffalo (NY), and the NANOworks Opera Workshop (Atlanta). In addition, he has worked on commissions and collaborations on chamber, symphonic, and operatic works with numerous groups, West Edge Opera, Daedalus Quartet, and Ensemble Dal Niente, to name a few.

Suleiman received his Ph.D. from University of California, Davis (Provost Fellowship) where his advisor was Kurt Rohde, and his B.M. from Sacramento State. He has taught as a Lecturer at the Sacramento State School of Music and was an Associate Instructor at UC

Davis, in addition to teaching composition and theory as a private instructor. Ryan resides in Boston with his wife / musical collaborator, Sakurako Kanemitsu, and several furry animals. He enjoys long walks, good food, and the films of Hayao Miyazaki. More information available at [www.ryansuleiman.com](http://www.ryansuleiman.com).

## Laura Rose Schwartz

*Parse* (2020)

*Parse*, is the first time I have wanted to write a piece directly connected to my personal experiences. At the end of 2017, I broke up with my long-term partner. *Parse* is not a breakup description piece. It does not tell the story of that relationship. It does tell my story. In the three-texts of *Parse* sung and spoken by the vocalist, they call out to themselves through the different texts, centering their story, their feelings, and their words. The ensemble acts as a mirror to the story-text, starting off tightly controlled and moving to the fringes. I wrote this piece because I feel a longing to reconcile the person, I am now with the person I was in *Parse*. I wrote my own vulnerability into music and that has been an experience.

- Laura Rose Schwartz

Laura R. Schwartz is an educator, composer, and video projectionist. She regularly performs on amplified electric fan, calculators, and screens. Her music explores written notation as a facilitator of a performer's own creativity and self-formation. She blends together elements of traditionally notation scores, verbally notated scores, and illuminated manuscripts situating the participant in a space of their own curiosity and creativity. Laura uses cellphones, combs, and cut flowers to highlight everyday technologies as shapers of our lived sound environments. She regularly performs on guided improvisations on amplified electric fan. Her work creates an experience that allows listening to resonate with curiosity. Her current collaboration with Anna Elder involves amplified heartbeats, electronics, and voice. Laura is actively pursuing a certificate in Deep Listening from The Center for Deep Listening. Laura is also an active scholar in Music Theory and Musicology. She was a recipient of an Andrew Mellon Predoctoral Research Fellowship for 2018-2019 for her dissertation research on self-formation in works by Jenifer Walshe and Pauline Oliveros. Her primary research areas include: verbally notated scores, technologies of self, listening, voice/self in video game music, and Pauline Oliveros. She attended UC Davis (B.A. in Music,

## notes and biographies

2013), Illinois State University (M.M. in Composition, 2015), and the University of Pittsburgh (Ph.D. in Music Composition and Theory, 2019).

### **Olivier Messiaen** (1908–1992)

*Le Merle noir* (1952)

One of the foremost French composers of the 20th century, Olivier Messiaen developed a distinctive and original voice. As professor of composition at the Conservatoire de Paris from 1941-1978, he taught many distinguished composers including Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen. He was very innovative as a composer, constructing an original system of harmonic modes and a rhythmic style he called “additive” rhythm, in which individual notes in an otherwise regular rhythm are slightly altered. Messiaen was also a virtuoso organist, serving as the organist at the church of La Trinité in Paris from 1931 until his death, and a noted ornithologist. He considered birds the greatest musicians, and used transcribed birdsong in many compositions. His fascination with birdsong and his deeply felt Catholic faith were major influences on his work.

*Le Merle noir* (*The Blackbird*), commissioned for a flute competition at the Paris Conservatoire, was the first of Messiaen’s works to be entirely derived from birdsong. The opening cadenza, for flute alone, is Messiaen’s most detailed birdsong to date, while the reflective melody that follows is a backward glance, similar in style to his major symphonic work, *Turangalila*. The melodic inflection and rhythm follow the Catholic chant “omnia mea omnia peccata mundi.” In the coda, the flute is given the song of the blackbird, while the piano follows a strict pattern of rhythmic permutations (combined with 12-note rows), with a binary structure in which right and left hands swap material half way. In previous compositions the rigorous process had been the predominant strand, ornamented by the birdsong. But in *Le Merle noir* the birds are in the foreground, and it is the process in the piano part that is subsidiary, with the rhythms too close in register (the high treble) and too blurred by pedal to be experienced as anything more than a texture. A month after composing *Le Merle noir*, Messiaen began to formally study ornithology.

- Stacey Pelinka

### **Paul McCartney**

*Blackbird* (1968)

**B**lackbird, a song from the Beatles’ 1968 *White Album*, was written and performed by Paul

McCartney. He borrowed the song’s harmony from a Bach lute piece. The song’s lyrics make it a symbol of hope to many, with a reference to the blackbird leading the dawn chorus—a bird “singing in the dark of night,” and the line “You were only waiting for this moment to be free.” McCartney’s story about the origin of the song varied: At various times he claimed it was inspired by the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, by a blackbird heard singing while McCartney was in India, and by an elderly friend who listened to the blackbird as she lay awake at night. In any case, this delicate and tender song makes an interesting companion to Messiaen’s earliest foray into music inspired by bird song, *The Blackbird* (*Le Merle noir*).

- Anna Presler

### **Louise Farrenc** (1804–1875)

Trio for Flute, Cello, and Piano, Op. 45 (1861)

Isabelle Vengerova. Rosina Lhevinne. Adele Marcus. Yvonne Loriod. All major-league piano teachers at major-league conservatories, and all women. They shared an unheralded pedagogical ancestor in early 19th century composer and pianist Louise Farrenc, mainstay piano faculty at the Paris Conservatoire for decades. As we all know, European music outside of opera was mostly an exclusive men’s club well into the 19th century. Even before Clara Schumann started hammering against those moldy old walls, Farrenc established herself at the highest levels of the profession. She studied with the best—Ignaz Moscheles and Johann Nepomuk Hummel in piano, and Anton Reicha in composition. She concertized in prestigious venues. Her compositions were played by headliners such as Joseph Joachim.

As a composer she was of a distinctly conservative stripe, eschewing excess à la Liszt or bling à la Berlioz. Her catalog runs to the traditional genres: chamber music, symphonies, and (understandably) lots of solo piano stuff. No opera, though. After her death in 1875 she, and her music, fell into obscurity, and that’s a pity. She left a considerable legacy, well worth resuscitating—as in the fine trio for flute, cello and piano of 1861. To be sure, she wasn’t all that original a voice; much of Op. 45 could pass for vintage Mendelssohn with soupçons of Robert Schumann sprinkled hither and yon. But there’s a great deal to be said for professionally crafted, attractive and effective music, and Farrenc’s Op. 45 trio is all that and more, early Romanticism in all its considerable allure.

- Scott Fogelsong

# song lyrics

**Laura Rose Schwartz**

*Parse (2020)*

**Text 1:**

*Spoken straightforwardly to a close friend.*

I remember walking, and walking, and walking,  
Having no idea where I was going  
Just that, I could not be here.

I texted my therapist and walked, and walked, and walked.  
It hurt so much.

I want this not to have happened. I want to go on vacation. I want to trust you. I want to stop walking.

I walked into the road.  
I sat down and sobbed.

I remember calling my friend.  
Calling my mom.  
Calling my therapist.

**Text 2:**

*Sung in Jazz style, set as most versatile in emotional inflection.*

I want.  
I need.  
I'm so lonely.  
I'm here.

**Text 3:**

*Spoken and repeated through frustration and sobbing.*

THE WORDS THAT I WANT TO SAY AREN'T HERE.

**Ryan Suleiman**  
*The Robin (2020)*

O Robin, sing! for the secret of eternity is in song.  
I wish I were as you, free from prisons and chains.  
I wish I were as you; a soul flying over the valleys,  
Sipping the light as wine is sipped from ethereal cups.  
I wish I were as you, innocent, contented and happy  
Ignoring the future and forgetting the past.  
I wish I were as you in beauty, grace and elegance  
With the wind spreading my wings for adornment by the dew.  
I wish I were as you in beauty, a thought floating above the land  
Pouring out my songs between the forest and the sky.  
O Robin, sing! and disperse my anxiety.  
I listen to the voice within your voice  
that whispers in my inner ear.

**Paul McCartney**  
*Blackbird (1968)*

Blackbird singing in the dead of night  
Take these broken wings and learn to fly  
All your life  
You were only waiting for this moment to arise  
Blackbird singing in the dead of night  
Take these sunken eyes and learn to see  
All your life  
You were only waiting for this moment to be free  
Blackbird fly, blackbird fly  
Into the light of a dark black night  
Blackbird fly, blackbird fly  
Into the light of a dark black night  
Blackbird singing in the dead of night  
Take these broken wings and learn to fly  
All your life  
You were only waiting for this moment to arise  
You were only waiting for this moment to arise  
You were only waiting for this moment to arise

## musician biographies

PIANO San Francisco-based **Allegra Chapman** is an omnivorous soloist and chamber musician, adventurous curator, and passionate educator. Her performances have been described as “fervid but impeccably controlled” by the *San Francisco Chronicle* and “brilliant” by the *San Francisco Classical Voice*. She is a member of the award-winning Delphi Trio with violinist Liana Bérubé and cellist Tanya Tomkins, and of the voice and piano duo Chordless with soprano Sara LeMesh. As a presenter, Allegra is the founding co-artistic director and executive director of the critically acclaimed festival Bard Music West, a San Francisco-based branch of the Bard Music Festival.

As an educator, Allegra has coached chamber music ensembles at many institutions, including San Francisco State University and Xi'an Conservatory of Music. Her student ensembles have received top prizes in regional and national competitions. Allegra is currently on faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Pre-College division.

Allegra received her Master of Music from The Juilliard School and graduated in the inaugural class of the Bard College Conservatory of Music with degrees in history and piano performance. Allegra owes much to her many wonderful teachers who include Joseph Bloom, Jeremy Denk, Seymour Lipkin, Sharon Mann, Julian Martin, John McCarthy, and Peter Serkin.

CELLO **Leighton Fong**, longtime member of LCCE, is Principal Cello of California Symphony. He plays regularly with Eco Ensemble and Empyrean Ensemble, and was a member of San Francisco Contemporary Players. Fong studied at the San Francisco Conservatory, New England Conservatory, Bern Conservatory, and the Royal Danish Conservatory in Copenhagen. He has taught at UC Berkeley since 1997.

SOPRANO Canadian Lyric Coloratura soprano, **Nikki Einfeld** has been widely recognized for her “high flying virtuosity” (NY Times) as well as “a bright, lithe tone, pinpoint accuracy and a saucy stage demeanor” (San Francisco Chronicle). Highlights of Ms. Einfeld's recent operatic engagements include appearances with Calgary Opera as Gilda in *Rigoletto*, the Controller in Jonathan Dove's *Flight* with Opera Parallele, Diana in *The Chastity Tree* with West Edge Opera, and Curley's Wife in Carlisle Floyd's *Of Mice and Men*. Other recent world premieres include Allen Shearer's *Howard's End America* as Margaret, the title role in *Death with Interruptions* by Kurt Rhode, and several roles in San Francisco Opera's Delores Claiborne. A highly adept interpreter of repertoire spanning from the baroque to contemporary music, Ms. Einfeld performs regularly on the concert and recital stage. Appearances include The San Francisco Symphony, Berkeley Symphony, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra New Music Festival, Victoria Symphony, and Empyrean Ensemble. She is member of the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble where her collaboration yielded a Best Chamber Music/Opera Performance win from San Francisco Classical Voice in 2016 and 2018.

FLUTE **Stacey Pelinka** began performing with the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble in 1998. She is also a member of the Eco Ensemble, with whom she toured to Venice for the 2014 Biennale. She plays principal flute with San Francisco Opera's Merola Program productions and is a member of the Santa Rosa Symphony, the Berkeley Symphony, the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and the Midsummer Mozart Festival. A certified Feldenkrais Method® practitioner, Stacey enjoys applying principals of the method in teaching and performing. She teaches flute at UC Berkeley and UC Davis, and Feldenkrais at the San Francisco Symphony. Stacey attended Cornell University and the San Francisco Conservatory, where she studied with Timothy Day.

## upcoming events

### **Left Coast at SF International Arts Festival | October 23 2021**

Sharing a program with Chamber Music Society of San Francisco, Left Coast violinist, Anna Presler, and cellist, Leighton Fong, will perform Zoltán Kodály's lush and dramatic Duo for Violin and Cello Op. 7.

The Chamber Music Society of San Francisco will perform selections from Beethoven's effervescent String Trio in G Major, Op 9 No 1 and Dohnanyi's rich and vibrant Serenade, Op 10.

Saturday, October 23, 12:00 PM

Fort Mason, Black Point Battery, San Francisco

### **Sierra Chamber Society Program III | December 5 2021**

The Sierra Chamber Society presents Left Coast and pianist Marc Shapiro for an afternoon concert of Samuel Coleridge Taylor's Quintet for Clarinet and Strings and L. van Beethoven's Trio for Piano and Strings, Op.70 No. 2.

Sunday, December 5, 2021, 3:00PM

Grace Presbyterian Church, 2100 Tice Valley Blvd. Walnut Creek, CA

### **Living in Color | January 9 & 10 2022**

Inspired by the irresistible fun of *I prefer living in color*, Sarah Gibson's 2019 Left Coast Composition Competition winning work for percussion and ensemble, this program celebrates composers particularly adept at exploiting instruments' timbral possibilities—from Errolyn Waller's stormy *Dervish* and Gabriel Fauré's dreamy use of the clarinet, to the evocative sounds of myths conjured by Karol Szymanowski.

Sunday, January 9, 2022, 7:30PM

venue TBA, Berkeley, CA

Monday, January 10, 2022, 7:30PM

Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez Street, San Francisco, CA

### **Clarinet Party | April 10 & 11 2022**

For an evening of clarinet virtuosity, LCCE brings together three amazing clarinetists: Left Coast's Jerome Simas and guests Jeff Anderle, a founding member of the ensembles Sqwonk and Splinter Reeds, and Carey Bell, principal clarinetist of the San Francisco Symphony. The trio will perform Mozart's Divertimento for 3 Basses and an arrangement by Anderle of the song *Zoetrope*. David Garner's new clarinet work receives its world premiere and music of Olly Wilson, Jesse Montgomery and Sebastián Tozzola is also featured.

Sunday, April 10, 2022, 7:30PM

venue TBA, Berkeley, CA

Monday, April 11, 2022, 7:30PM

SF Conservatory of Music, 50 Oak Street, San Francisco, CA

### **Myth & Memory: Berio Folk Songs with New Companions | June 5 & 6 2022**

Luciano Berio celebrates the rich materials of folklore in Folk Songs, arranging songs from all over the globe — from *Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair* to the *Azerbaijan Love Song*. New commissions by Left Coast remix additional folk songs to complement Berio's masterpiece, and Carl Schimmel gives us a topsy-turvy resetting of the classic Little Red Riding Hood story for the 21st century!

Sunday, June 5, 2022, 7:30PM

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley, 101 Cross Sproul Path, Berkeley, CA

Monday, June 6, 2022, 7:30PM

SF Conservatory of Music, 50 Oak Street, San Francisco, CA



# about left coast

Left Coast Chamber Ensemble (LCCE) is a consortium of thirteen Bay Area musicians who create exciting performances of all types of music for all types of audiences. We work as a cohesive collective of artists who share values of integrity, quality, inclusion, service, curiosity, and advocacy. LCCE embraces a dialogue between music of the present with musical influences of the past, combining a vast repertoire into thematic performances in our established and well-received concert series. We are also committed to continuing and evolving our broad-based education program, sponsoring our annual composition contest, and collaborating with current and diverse artists, thinkers, and scholars.

LCCE brings all types of music including small ensemble, vocal, orchestral, multi-media, and operatic productions to our listeners, conveying an essential and profound experience. With Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, nothing is out of bounds, and anything is possible.

## LEFT COAST MUSICIANS

Nikki Einfeld  
Leighton Fong  
Michael Goldberg  
Matilda Hofman  
Phyllis Kamrin  
Loren Mach  
Stacey Pelinka  
Anna Presler  
Kurt Rohde  
Jerome Simas  
Michel Taddei  
Tanya Tomkins  
Eric Zivian

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