

## Tonight's Program

*This event is supported by generous gifts from Barbara Bessey, Earthways Foundation, and Ubuntu Coffee Co-Operative.*

**Nite Traps (1981)** The entrance music for today's concert was composed in 1981 using a lakeside recording of frogs and crickets overlaid by an ostinato produced by an electronic drum machine at its slowest setting (quarter note = 40 beats to the minute). The mix was created at ZBS Media in upstate New York with engineer Bobby Bielecki.

**Im Frühling (1990)** In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, composers such as Smetana, Dvorak and Liszt conjured the sound of nature and the narrative drama of the novella in the form of music composed for symphonic forces. *Im Frühling* reverses this process so that, by means of late 20<sup>th</sup> Century technology, the sounds of nature are made to imitate orchestral music as we have come to know it. Sound sources include original recordings made by the composer and various prominent recordists from sites in many parts of the globe. Some of these will be recognizable and others will be thoroughly transformed, giving a spectrum from representational to abstract imagery. The sounds were altered digitally in the Syncavier studio of composer Henry Kaiser in Oakland, California, and mixed in the 24-track studios of Sprocket Systems (LucasFilm Co.) in San Rafael, CA. The work was commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts and Westdeutscher Rundfunk for premiere at the Whitney Museum of Art in New York in April 1990.

## Artist Bios

**Charles Amirkhanian** Born January 19, 1945, in Fresno, California, Charles Amirkhanian is a leading U.S. practitioner of electroacoustic music and text-sound composition. He is widely known for his live and fixed media works utilizing speech elements in rhythmic patterns resembling percussion music. In his later works, produced with Syncavier and Kurzweil digital synthesizers, Amirkhanian incorporates sampled acoustic environmental sounds (that he calls "representational") and traditional musical pitched sounds ("abstract") to sculpt disjunct audio narratives and induce a state of trance-like listening. His music is available on Starkland, Other Minds, New World, Wergo, Fylkingen, Cantaloupe, and Centaur Records. With Jim Newman in 1993, Amirkhanian co-founded Other Minds, a new music organization in San Francisco, and he serves as its Executive & Artistic Director. His radio programs (KPFA, 1969-1992) are archived for free listening at radOM.org and on the Internet Archive.

**Kyle Gann** Born November 21, 1955, in Dallas, Texas, Kyle Gann is a composer and the author of seven books on American music, including ones on Charles Ives's *Concord Sonata*, John Cage's "4'33'", and Conlon Nancarrow's *Studies for Player-Piano*. He studied composition with Ben Johnston, Morton Feldman, and Peter Gena, and about a fourth of his own music is microtonal. His 17-movement *Hyperchromatica* for three retuned, computer-driven pianos, was released in 2018 on a two-CD set from Other Minds Records. He serves on the music faculty of Bard College.

## Tonight's Program, cont.

**Loudspeakers** (New World Records 80817)

In December 2019, New World Records, in association with West German Radio, released a two CD set of music by Charles Amirkhanian. Tonight's concert introduces two works from the four half-hour-long compositions that comprise "Loudspeakers." In addition, there is *Pianola (Pas de mains)*, a ten-movement suite based on the sounds of historical player piano rolls, and *Loudspeakers*, based entirely on the sounds of recorded speech by the late composer Morton Feldman. Some of his comments appear in shards of paper depicted in the cover art by Carol Law.

"Loudspeakers" is available at the Other Minds web-store, [otherminds.org](http://otherminds.org).

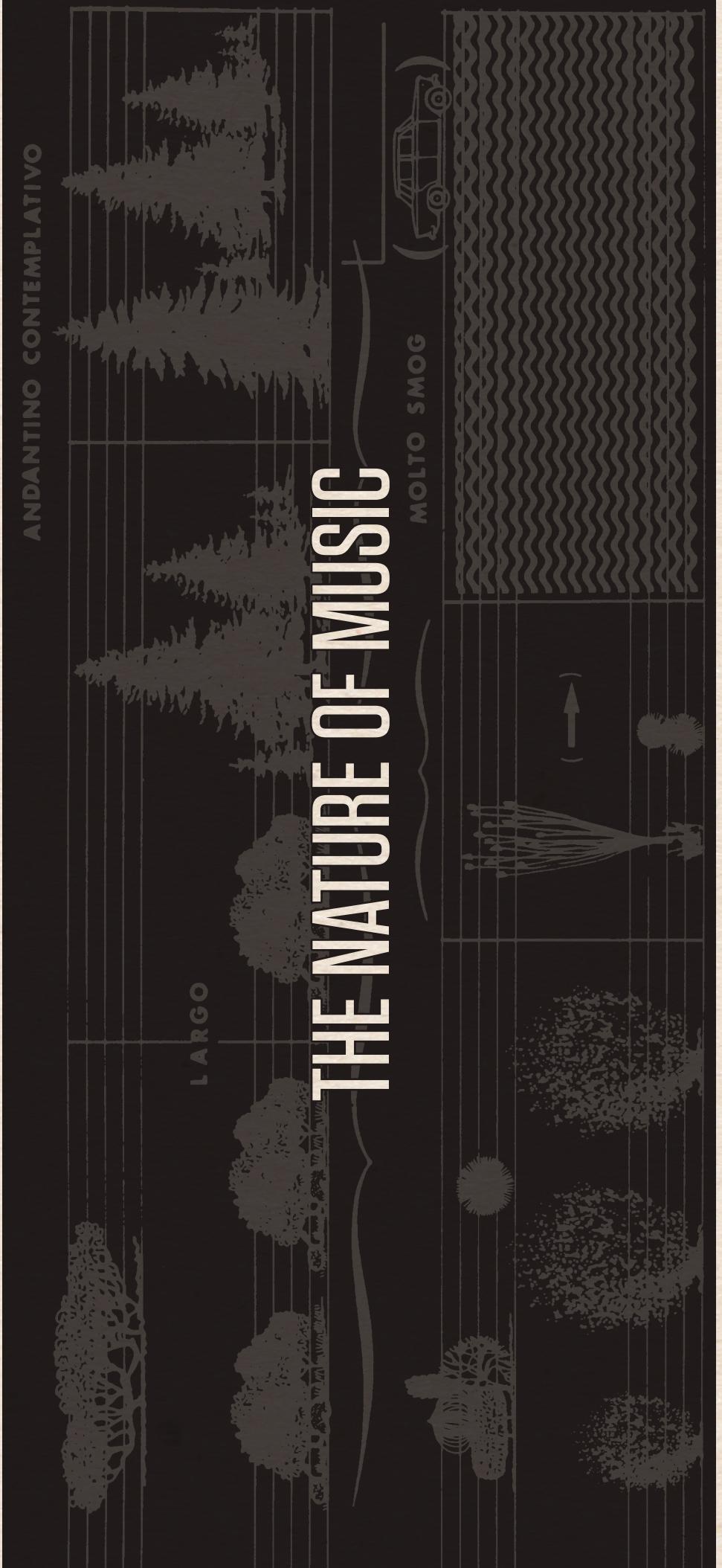
A large and distinguished catalog of American music (1776-2019) on New World Records may be accessed at [newworldrecords.org](http://newworldrecords.org).



**Son of Metropolis San Francisco (1986; 1997)** In *Metropolis San Francisco*, the sounds of the environment recorded in real time are juxtaposed with those same sounds, sampled and looped or repeated at irregular intervals to create an ambiguous but seductive narrative. The work originally was composed as one of a series of city portraits commissioned from various composers worldwide by producer Klaus Schönning and broadcast over West German Radio Köln.

*Metropolis San Francisco* (1986) was conceived as a musical Hörspiel—an experimental "earplay" composition on tape for radio broadcast or concert performance—inspired by the ambience of the city itself as well as its surroundings. The present subsequent edition of the piece, condensed from 55 minutes to 26:30, is titled *Son of Metropolis San Francisco* and was completed in 1997. This is a non-literal work composed of sounds recorded over a year-long period ending in April 1986.

The music begins with an explosion of sound that reappears in the piece, representing obliquely the ever-present threat of an earthquake. A quiet forest, the sounds of mating elephant seals, speech by Bay Area immigrants from Tonga, a violent passage from a Chinese television soap opera, a wooden bucket shower and the overflow valve from a swimming pool at Harbin Hot Springs, plus whimsical musical interludes, reveal the composer's preference for imagining greater San Francisco not as a "metropolis" but as a place surrounded by great natural beauty.



# THE NATURE OF MUSIC

MOLTO SMOG



**THE NATURE OF MUSIC** Since the music of Haydn, Dvořák and Messiaen, classical composers have been using the sounds of the natural world as source material. With the advent of reel-to-reel tape recorders that inspired composers of the musique concrete movement, we could hear sounds slowed down or speeded up to bring new ears to common everyday sources. Along the way John Cage proposed in 1952, with '4'33", a silent piece for piano, that a listener could create their own concert by simply listening to ambient sounds without altering them, recognizing that they too have form and content. With the advent of personal recording equipment like the cassette recorder, environmental sounds have been recorded, sampled and integrated into composed and improvised music. In 1970, Charles Amirkhanian and Richard Friedman launched the World Ear Project at KPFA in Berkeley. They invited people from around the world to record continuous sound for 15 minutes or longer without alteration. The result was a long-running program in which listeners driving over the Bay Bridge would be mystified by long segments of sounds of a street market in India or frogs and crickets at night in Cayucos, California.

**ARTWORK CREDITS** Images on the front cover and the top of this page are from compositions by Luciano Ori, from the collection of Charles Amirkhanian. The photo of Amirkhanian in front of the graffiti is by Carol Law, as is the 1985 photo of Charles recording mating elephant seals at Año Nuevo Beach, in San Mateo County, in Pescadero, California. The events image below is from an assemblage by Liam O'Gallagher, also from the collection of Charles Amirkhanian. Program designed by Mark Abramson.

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**LIST OF ARTISTS** The Nature of Music features composers and sound artists who incorporate environmental and ambient sounds into their musical compositions. Here is a chronological list of the artists we have presented so far, beginning in 2016.

CHERYL LEONARD

RAVEN CHACON

ALVIN CURRAN

ANDREW ROTH

MARIELLE V JAKOBSONS

ANNEA LOCKWOOD

BILL FONTANA

MICHAEL PISARO

JOSHUA CHURCHILL &amp; JOHN DAVIS

LINDA BOUCHARD

ANNE GUTHRIE

MATTHEW BURTNER

CHARLES AMIRKHANIAN

JIM NOLLMAN (coming May 7, 2020)



**OTHER MINDS®** is dedicated to the encouragement and propagation of contemporary music in all its forms through concerts, workshops and conferences that bring together artists and audiences of diverse traditions, generations and cultural backgrounds. By fostering cross-cultural exchange and creative dialogue, and by encouraging exploration of areas in new music seldom touched upon by mainstream music institutions, Other Minds is committed to expanding and reshaping the definition of what constitutes "serious music."

[www.otherminds.org](http://www.otherminds.org)

## UPCOMING OTHER MINDS EVENTS

**Scenes from *Hutong*, an opera in progress by award-winning Chinese American composer, Kui Dong**  
Thursday, March 12, 2020, 8:00 pm  
Cinnabar Theater, Petaluma CA

**Other Minds Festival 25, "Moment's Notice"**  
**A series of concerts of instant compositions, honoring the art of improvisation**  
Taube Atrium Theater, San Francisco

**Thursday, April 2, 2020 @ 8pm:** Myra Melford/Mark Dresser/Oguri, William Winant/Zeena Parkins/Ikué Mori, William Parker/Hamid Drake/Patricia Nicolson

**Friday, April 3, 2020 @ 8pm:** Roscoe Mitchell/Ambrose Akinmusire/Junius Paul/Vincent Davis, Mats Gustafsson/Joe McPhee, Jen Shyu

**Saturday, April 4, 2020 @ 8pm:** Joelle Leandre/Lauren Newton, Wadada Leo Smith/Jesse Gilbert, Darius Jones/Amirtha Kidambi

**Sunday, April 5, 2020 @ 4pm:** Mary Halvorson/Sylvie Courvoisier, Elliot Sharp, Anthony Braxton/Jacqueline Kerrod

