

About 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 concrète* movement, we could hear sounds slowed down or sped 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 across 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.

About Other Minds: 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.”

About the David Brower Center: The David Brower Center provides a home for the environmental movement by advocating for the beauty, diversity, and ecological integrity of Earth. The Center accomplishes this mission through a distinctive combination of permanent infrastructure and ongoing programs. It informs the public about environmental challenges and the bold actions we must take if ours is to remain a living planet; inspires people to recognize their own power and responsibility to act on behalf of the Earth; and connects individuals and organizations dedicated to social equity and ecological sustainability. browercenter.org

On the Cover: Image from the cover of the Voyager Golden Records, phonograph records that were included aboard both Voyager spacecraft launched in 1977. They contain sounds and images selected to portray the diversity of life and culture on Earth, and are intended for any intelligent extraterrestrial life form, or for future humans, who may find them.

UPCOMING OTHER MINDS EVENTS

Øyvind Torvund's *The Exotica Album*, U.S. premiere
with San Francisco Contemporary Music Players

Monday, June 6, 2022 @ 8 PM

The Freight & Salvage

2020 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA 94704

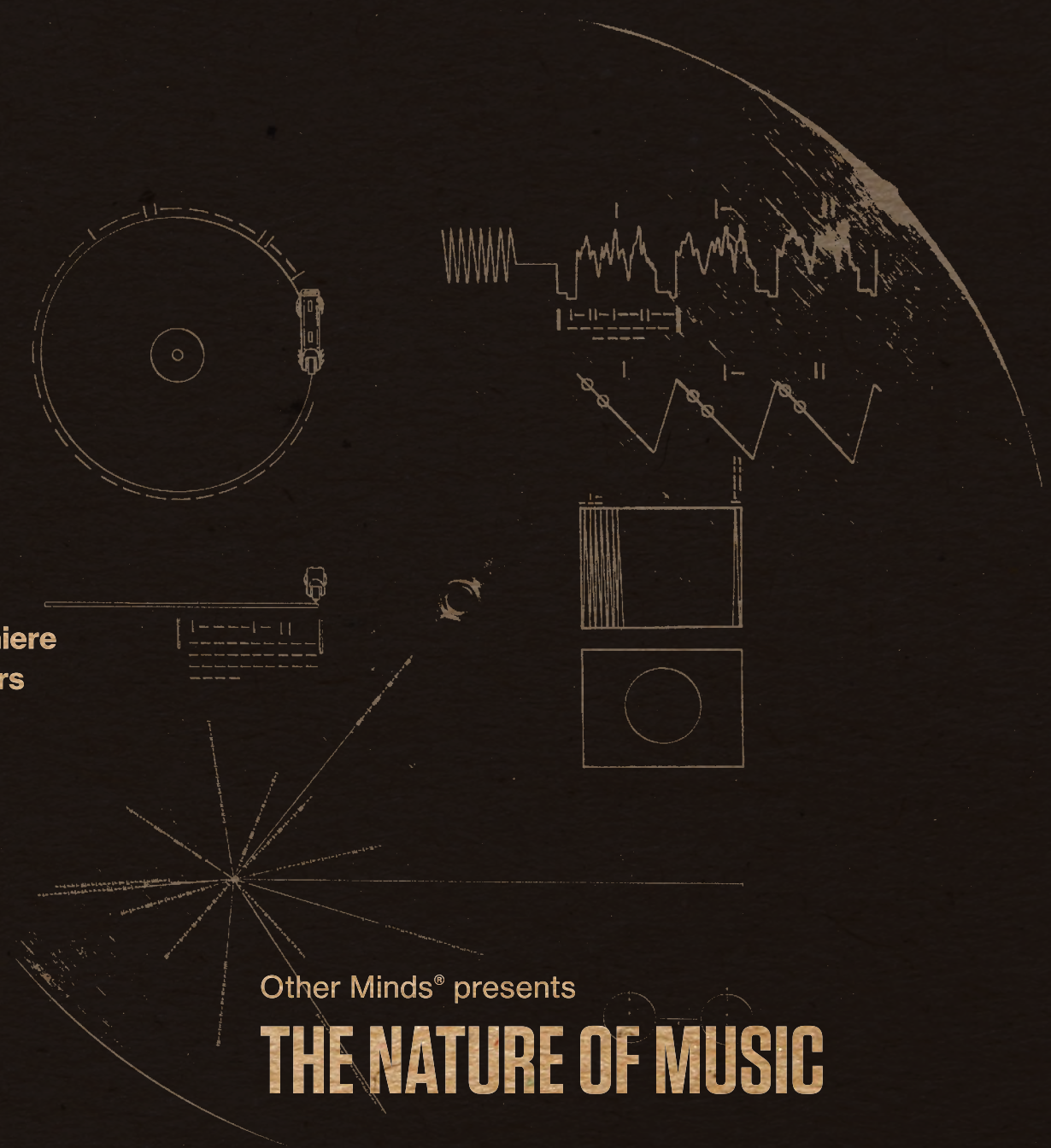
Other Minds Festival 26

October 13-15, 2022

The Great Star Theater

636 Jackson Street, San Francisco, CA 94133

Further information: otherminds.org



Other Minds® presents

THE NATURE OF MUSIC

composer

CHRISTOPHER LUNA-MEGA

with **SPLINTER REEDS**

moderator – Charles Amirkhanian

Wednesday, May 11, 2022, 7:30pm

David Brower Center, Goldman Theater

2150 Allston Way

Berkeley, CA 94704



OTHER MINDS
REVELATIONARY NEW MUSIC

Other Minds® presents

THE NATURE OF MUSIC

**PROGRAM NOTES ON *NIGHT MUSIC*
FOR REED QUINTET AND ELECTRONICS (2018-2022)**

Night Music, for reed quintet and electronics, is a musical translation of the soundscape of a Virginian forest in summer. In such environments, density is a common denominator for heat, humidity, and, in this particular place, a cacophony of crickets, katydids, and cicadas. One of the most striking features of this soundscape is the gradual increase of sonic activity that takes place at dusk. Density and loudness change dramatically as day turns into night—a process marked by transition from harmony to noise. The process of saturation is seamless, always filling in subtly, like a gradient as night falls.

Luna-Mega’s compositional process began by recording and analyzing the soundscape. The recordings, which the audience will hear in their entirety during the performance, were made with five microphones recording simultaneously in a pentagonal formation, at a distance of ~30 meters between each mic. The aim was to capture the constantly shifting sound in the forest throughout the recorded perimeter, expanding the auditory field through a 360° capture while retaining his ability to isolate or magnify particular sounds. The composer analyzed each of the five recordings and notated the sounds with the aid of sonograms, which provided visual representations of pitch content over time. Musical material from the soundscape is assigned to the reed quintet based on performance feasibility. Given the high-pitched nature of the decidual forest, all the original sounds are transposed down to the ranges of the reed quintet. Bear in mind that the music does not mimic or replicate the summer dusk soundscape, but rather extracts its sound patterns as implements for musical content.

An important element in this full version of *Night Music* is the juxtaposition of performance determinacy and indeterminacy. While the main sections of the piece use conventional notation, the interludes between the sections feature the performers rearranging the order of the phrases and motifs of their parts at specified periods of time. The result is a randomized temporal organization analogous to nature.

Lastly, the opening of each section consists of instrumental pauses that bring the field recordings to the foreground. The audience is invited here to listen for the pitches, harmonies, noises, rhythms, and textures of the forest that have been integrated into the music.



Christopher Luna-Mega. Photo by Iván Espinosa (Ocho Venado Media).

ABOUT CHRISTOPHER LUNA-MEGA

Christopher Luna-Mega (christopherlunamega.com) is a composer and improviser from Mexico City. Interested in focused listening, performance strategies, audio technology, and interdisciplinary collaboration, his work analyzes sounds and data from natural and urban environments and translates them into notated music for performers and electronics in various forms of media.

His orchestral music has been performed by the Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Bologna, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Montreal-Toronto Art Orchestra, and Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México, conducted by Tonino Battista, Ilan Volkov, Gregory Oh, and José Luis Castillo, respectively. Ensembles that have performed his instrumental works include Splinter Reeds, the New Thread Quartet, Yarn/Wire, The William Winant Percussion Group, JACK Quartet, and The Arditti Quartet. His music has been featured in festivals such as the New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, Seoul International Computer Music Festival (Gwanju), Angelica (Bologna), Tectonics (Reykjavik), Tectonics (Glasgow), L'Off (Montreal), Avant X (Toronto), Mills Music Now (Oakland, CA), and the International Forum for New Music “Manuel Enriquez” (Mexico City). His research on acoustic ecology and environmental sound-based composition has been presented and published in the proceedings of the Computer Music Multidisciplinary Research conference and the Jefferson Journal.



Splinter Reeds. Photo by Lenny Gonzalez.

ABOUT SPLINTER REEDS

Splinter Reeds is the West Coast’s first reed quintet, formed in 2013 by five colleagues active in the New Music scene throughout the Bay Area and internationally. The sum of their wide ranges of experience – in settings including free jazz, improvisation, electronic music, pop, punk, and metal as well as classical – has enabled them to rapidly zero in on a distinct aesthetic identity. Distinguishing themselves amongst even the relatively small number of professional reed quintets currently active worldwide, the ensemble is explicitly dedicated to cutting-edge composition and expanding the existing reed quintet repertoire through the collaborative development of new works by emerging and established composers.

A relatively new chamber music genre, the reed quintet is an evolutionary detour from the traditional woodwind quintet with the advantage of a more closely related instrument family. Splinter Reeds has explored the genre’s expansive possibilities in close collaboration with composers like Amadeus Regucera, Eric Wubbels, Sky Macklay, Paula Matthusen, Marc Mellits, Michael Gordon, Theresa Wong, and Ken Ueno. They presented North American premieres by European-based composers Dai Fujikura, Matthew Shlomowitz, and Yannis Kyriakides, among others. Notable performances have included appearances at Music Current (Dublin, Ireland), Vancouver New Music, Frequency Series at Chicago’s Constellation, Festival of New American Music (Sacramento), Blue Sage Center for the Arts (Paonia, CO), Berkeley Art Museum, Indexical (Santa Cruz), and numerous academic institutions.

Splinter Reeds (splinterreeds.com) is fiscally sponsored through InterMusic SF. Tonight’s players are: Kyle Bruckmann - oboe; Bill Kalinkos - clarinet; Nicki Roman - saxophone; Jeff Anderle - bass clarinet; Dana Jessen - bassoon.