

San Francisco Tape Music Festival Saturday January 6, 2024 9:30pm

[Cliff Caruthers](#)

Natoma (2003)

22'00" Stereo

Natoma takes its name from *Quiet American's Field Effects* series at 964 Natoma, where it premiered in October of 2003. Sources of the full length composition include the text from a lullaby by Woody Guthrie read by Stacy Parker, Jonathan Benham's rebar bell instrument, field recordings from California, Colorado, Missouri, and New York, and a conversation that never took place in Ontario, Canada.

[Cliff Caruthers](#) is a San Francisco-based sound designer and composer with over 300 theatre production credits, including *Born with Teeth* for Alley Theatre, *Frankenstein* for Guthrie Theater, *Caucasian Chalk Circle* for ACT, *TRAGEDY: A Tragedy* for Berkeley Rep, *Sweat* for Center Rep, *Man in Love* for KC Rep, and *Fun Home* for TheatreWorks, where he was Resident Sound Designer for seven years. He is co-curator of the SF Tape Music Festival, a proud member of United Scenic Artists, and teaches sound design at SFSU

[Julie Herndon](#)

From Nothing (2023)

10'00" 5.1 Surround

I moved to a new place. During the transition, I felt the empty quality that comes with a new home: furniture that doesn't quite fit, old friends that are now distant, new friends that are not yet close. In the gap between old patterns and new ones, I found myself recording long, slow melodies on the harmonium, sending them through loops, delays, and distortion so I could immerse myself in the sound. Listening back to the

recordings, I started to notice the qualities of my new environment: the wind in the trees outside my window, the cicadas singing seamlessly alongside the electronics. A world began to emerge from nothing.

[Julie Herndon](#) is a composer, performer, and sound artist. Her work explores the body's relationship to sound using tools like musical instruments and personal technologies. Her electroacoustic work has been described as “truly brilliant and utterly affected” (Kulturpunkt), “like a signal from another world” (Tages-Anzeiger), and “blended to inhabit a surprisingly expressive space” (San Francisco Classical Voice). Her compositions and installations have been presented at MATA Festival and National Sawdust in New York, Artistry Space in Singapore, Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Oaxaca (MACO) in Mexico, Music Biennale Zagreb (MBZ), and by Forest Collective in Australia. Julie is the recipient of the Elisabeth Crothers Award for Music Composition, American Composers Forum Bay Area Residency, National Sawdust New Works Commission, Chamber Music America Commissioning Grant, and New Music America Creator Fund. She is currently Assistant Professor of Music Technology and Composition at California Polytechnic State University.

[Fabio Selva](#)

THE FALL (2020)

III. *Convexities, among the ruins*

11'00" Stereo

Convexities, among the ruins is the third movement of the work *THE FALL*, an acousmatic music that investigates the complexities between in-formal abstractions and pathos in sound manifestations. Described as an “old fashioned symphonic electronic poem,” *THE FALL* explores a spiritual transmutation where biographical sound marks collide with intangible sounds from the uncanny. From the clash of this alchemical counterpoint emerge the third movement of the work, *Convexities, among*

the ruins as tremors of reality “toward which perception moves” (Ezra Pound). Multiple narrative levels develop from field recordings to processed and synthesized sounds, from tape reel manipulations to time-frequency esoteric processing techniques. These aural concretions interlock one another forming, by magic or accident, gyre, torsions and turbulences. Here the sounds become bodies and not just debris of acoustic matter. A tangible physic of phantasmatic presences that scrape the loudspeaker cones: rocks, sands and telluric tremors turn into omens of the pathos-logic in order to transmute auditory mereotopologies into a panpsychic acousmatic engine. The movement is dedicated to the Italian philosopher Julius Evola.

[Fabio Selvaforita](#) was born in Milan, Italy in 1973. He has an interdisciplinary background in music, musicology and audiovisuals. After musical studies in classical guitar in Milan he took a master degree in musicology at Bologna University. In 1997 he founded a company about video production and post production where he worked for a national and international network with commercials, documentaries and experimental videos. Simultaneously, from 1997 to 1999 he studied electronic and computer music and at Sezione di Musica Contemporanea della Civica Scuola di Musica di Milano with Alvise Vidolin. Since 2006 he has worked in composition, as a filmmaker, and as a sound/film professor. Some of his music scores are published by Ut Orpheus Edition, Da Vinci Publishing and Stradivarius Editions. He teaches Sound Design at NABA University Milan and Film and Video editing at C.F.T.A. professional training courses.

Intermission

[Pierre Schaeffer](#)

Étude violette (1948/1971)

3'20" Monophonic

First performances:

Original version: French National Radio, Paris Channel; October 5, 1948

Revised version: Halles Baltard, Paris; February 16, 1971

The revised *Étude violette* [*Study in Purple*], which opens the *Quatre études de bruits* of 1971, is a substantial revision of what appeared in 1948's *Cinq études*. The fourth étude of the original, *Composée ou Étude au Piano* [*Composed or Study for Piano*] was later separated into two parts: *Étude violette* [*Study in purple*] and *Étude noire* [*Study in black*].

It should be no surprise, then, to learn *Étude violette* is a concrète piano étude, constructed of recorded sounds of the piano. At times rhythmic, orchestral, liturgical, organ-like, bell-ish, hell-ish(?), mechanical—the relentless ostinati suggest the inevitable and indifferent movement of time.

[Pierre Schaeffer](#) (1910-1995) is known primarily as the “father of *musique concrète*,” but he was also an writer, pioneer and veteran of radio, and founder and director of many special projects within the French national radio, in particular *Le Service de la Recherche* (The Research Service) which he directed from 1960 to 1975. He was a thinker and researcher whose ideas had applications in audiovisual communication and, most directly, in music. Although his compositional output was limited, some of the first *musique concrète* studies in 1948 are still as fresh and challenging as when they were produced. The 1948 premiere radio broadcast of Pierre Schaeffer's *Études de Bruits* (Noise Studies) serves now as it did then, as the best introduction to this entirely new musical form.

Pierre Schaeffer's theoretical work, the foundation of which he developed while working at Radiodiffusion Française, was published in 1966; his *Traité des Objets Musicaux*. It

remains the seminal treatise of *musique concrète*. His goal and research was to define a “solfege” of the sound universe based on the perception of sound and to question many previous notions about music, listening, perception, timbre, sound, etc. In 1958, within the structure of the French national radio, he formed the *Groupe de Recherches Musicales* (GRM), which continues today. GRM was at first mobilized to conduct group research into its founder’s ideas.

Elizabeth Anderson

***Les ailes de l’augure* (2021)**

14’00” Octophonic

2021 - A warm summer evening floating under a crescent moon. Years of searching, wandering and questioning suddenly come to a halt in the breathlessness of the present moment where gravity is suspended.

Now - To express this, *Les ailes de l’augure* entwines themes of realism, fantasy and surrealism from different spatial perspectives that are often aviary in nature and vary depending on the type of species and their habitats yet which are perceived through, and adapted to, the human senses. For example, the beginning of the work attempts to convey the spatial topography of a distant landscape as perceived by a lone eagle in flight whereas the spatial perspectives in subsequent sections are varied and superimposed, reflecting the spatial behavior of different types - and sizes - of birds as perceived simultaneously.

Initial sound material for the work was recorded in Belgian forests, at the Zwin nature reserve at the North Sea coast as well as indoors. The title is inspired by the French surrealist essayist, poet and writer, André Breton.

Les ailes de l’augure was realized in 2021 at the Métamorphoses d’Orphée studio of Musiques & Recherches in Ohain (Belgium) and in the composer’s studio and premiered

on October 24, 2021 in the Festival L'Espace du Son (Brussels, Belgium). The piece was commissioned by Musiques & Recherches.

Les ailes de l'augure was composed with support from the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (Administration générale de la culture, Service de la musique).

Thanks to for Bonnie Sher, the Takats family, and Annette Vande Gorne their assistance.

[Elizabeth Anderson](#)'s artistic production comprises acousmatic, mixed, and radiophonic works as well as works for multimedia and sound installations. Her music has won international awards and has been performed in international venues for over thirty years. She is currently a professor in the department of electroacoustic composition at the Conservatoire royal de Mons. She completed initial degrees in music in the United States before studying composition with Jacqueline Fontyn and electroacoustic composition with Annette Vande Gorne in Belgium. She earned a doctorate in electroacoustic composition with Denis Smalley at City University London in 2011. Underlying her creative and pedagogical approach is her research on the perception of electroacoustic music. In 2022, she was elected as a full member of the Class of Arts at the Royal Academy of Belgium.

[Xopher Davidson](#)

Elegy (VII) (2022-2023)

8'42" Hexaphonic

Elegy (VII): for photosynthesis and pipe organ (dedicated to Roger & Nancy)

All things passing and returning.

The sound recording of [Xopher Davidson \[ANTIMATTER\]](#) is an exploration into the material of sound, from nearly imperceivable subatomic drift to room spanning subharmonic long waves. He has performed as a duo with David Kwan and with Zbigniew Karkowski, and as a member of the groups Citizen Band, Circular Firing Squad, Splendor Generator, and 45/102.

[Matias Vilaplana Stark](#)

Funeral For A Whale (2023)

12'52" Octophonic

Funeral for a Whale developed from my curiosity regarding the funeral practices of whales and other marine mammals, some of whom carry their deceased relative's body for days as a manifestation of their mourning. Sometimes, whales and dolphins will even keep vigils around their deceased family members or companions. I found this at once so strange and uncanny, and yet also so immediately relatable as a communal expression of grief and loss. This piece imagines that space of grief and reflects on their ceremonies of remembrance. I often feel reluctant to impose a narrative on my music for fear of it being too restrictive for listeners. My goal when creating music is always to encourage reflection and imagination, not to be too overly prescriptive regarding what the music is really about. My hope is that *Funeral for a Whale* can reconcile my anxieties by offering some context for the piece as I was creating it, while still inviting listeners to weave together a story of their own.

[Matias Vilaplana Stark](#) is a Chilean music technologist, composer, and improviser. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Composition and Computer Technologies program at the University of Virginia. His research interests lie at the intersection of immersive media and musical practice, working on designing interactive music environments with virtual reality systems and the creation of 3D virtual environments as graphic scores for musical improvisation. In his music, field recordings, sound synthesis and samples from

musical instruments are combined through different processing and editing techniques to blur the lines between real-world and abstract sounds, producing fictional soundscapes that cross over into the magical realm.



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