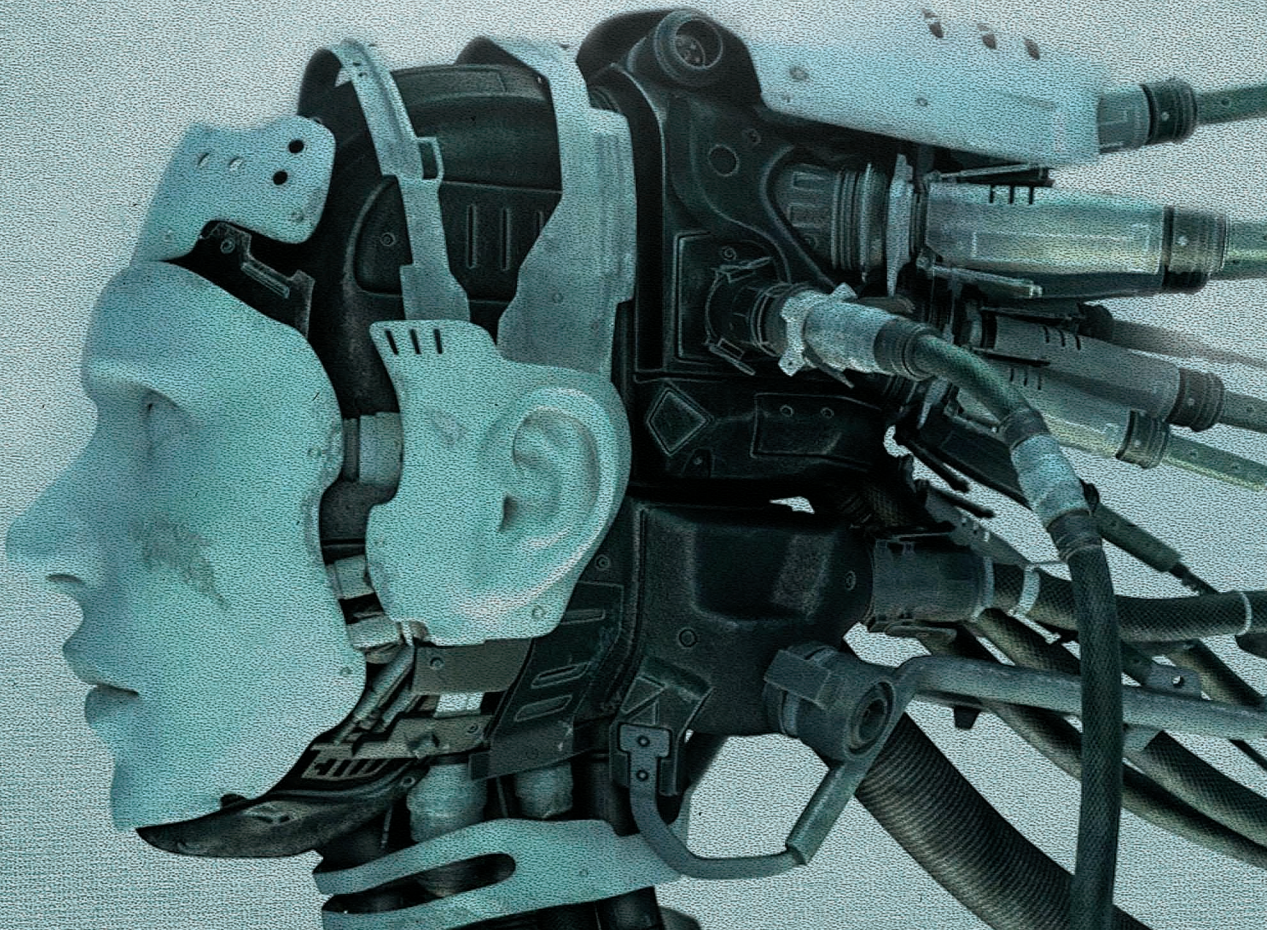


# The Voice Machine

October 7 & 8, 2016 7pm  
UC San Diego, Conrad Prebys Music Center  
Experimental Theater



# THE VOICE MACHINE

A collaboration between UC San Diego and Stanford University

October 7 & 8 2016 – 7:00 p.m.

Conrad Prebys Music Center – Experimental Theater

*How to Survive a 100-Hour Workweek* – Caroline Miller

Intermission

*Experiments in Opera II* – Jessie Marino

Intermission

*Knot an Opera!* – Constantin Basica

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During all performance breaks, please join us in the Conrad Prebys Concert Hall Lobby for:

*Metanoia* by Alexandra Hay

## *kallisti*

Hillary Jean Young, soprano  
Kirsten Ashley Wiest, soprano  
Ashley Cutright, mezzo-soprano

Jonathan Nussman, baritone  
Kyle Adam Blair, piano  
Technical Director: Jason Ponce

THE VOICE MACHINE is the result of two years of collaboration between composers and performers from Stanford and UC San Diego. The four pieces presented are all answers to a question: what is an opera, and what can it be? Four centuries of operatic history are lovingly invoked or discarded. Experiments in new technologies unlock pathways of interaction between performer and machine, voice and sound, audience and composer. Traditional narratives are abandoned as contemporary themes are mined and explored. Rather than presenting opera as an art form off-the-grid, we choose to plug in and see what happens. The outcome is an interplay between body, light, audience and the machine.

THE VOICE MACHINE grew from discussions between Susan Narucki, professor of music at UC San Diego and Jarek Kapuscinski, associate professor of music at Stanford University in late 2014. The driving force was a shared fascination with the expressive power and cultural phenomenon of singing. Their Fall 2015 seminar “Re-imagining Opera,” held concurrently on both campuses and connected through teleconference, laid the groundwork for an extended collaboration of composers and performers. The seminar dissected the elements of the operatic form as well as performance practices of experimental theater, and generated a wide range of discussion. The works presented this evening reflect the aesthetic concerns, imagination and artistry of the composers and performers in the project.

THE VOICE MACHINE is supported in part by the Department of Music at the University of California at San Diego, the Ben and A. Jess Shenson Fund at Stanford University and the generous gifts of Ms. Julia Falk and anonymous donors. The music departments at UC San Diego and Stanford University are recognized worldwide for excellence and innovation in the creation and performance of the music of our time.

Established by soprano Susan Narucki at the University of California San Diego in 2009, *kallisti* brings singers from UC San Diego’s graduate program in Contemporary Music Performance and distinguished guest artists together in exceptional collaborations. *kallisti* has presented chamber operas, vocal chamber music and newly commissioned works in critically acclaimed performances, including the world premiere of Anthony Davis’ *Lear on the Second Floor* (2013) and the San Diego premiere of Viktor Ullmann’s *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* (2012); the latter has been viewed more than 3,700 times in more than 20 countries on the group’s Vimeo channel.

### **Production**

Public Events Manager: David Espiritu

Asst. Public Events Manager: Nick Lesley

Light Board Operator: Daniel Barbarita

Stage Crew: Victoria Harris, Nhuxuan Ho, Laura Furtado

Production Manager, Lighting Designer: Jessica C. Flores

Promotions Manager: Meghan Roos

Promotions Design: Jennifer Bewerse

Program Associate: Rachel Beetz

## PROGRAM NOTES

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### **Caroline Louise Miller – *How to Survive a 100-hour Workweek***

To Choke:

Choking is an (re)action that induces in the body a severe and uncontrollable need to fight for breath, to expel a toxic substance. Taken as an issue of performance, choking often entails collapsing, running away, or refusing to cooperate. An object that chokes is an object that obstructs, that prevents things from flowing smoothly and according to plan.

Choking induces a will to fight, to recognize the things that are suffocating us and to *not* asphyxiate passively. Simultaneously it is a failure to live up to the expectations of a system that *requires bodies to function*.

Much of the text for this piece is taken from the sermons and writings of the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale, the author of *Power of Positive Thinking*, published in 1952. In this book, Peale prescribes repressing negative emotional states in favor of appearing happy at all times, as a way of maintaining productivity. Appearances in the electronic sound include the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale himself, Ronald Reagan, various lifestyle video bloggers, Jean Sibelius, a Christmas hymn played out by a marching band, and a swarm of arctic seals, amongst other sounds.

### **Jessie Marino – *Experiments in Opera II***

These are a few experiments in how to make an opera with as few materials as possible. There are many conflicting definitions of Opera, but the one I like the best is from Ranci re who defines Opera and all theatrical spectacle as “plac(ing) bodies in action before an assembled audience.”

So.

What’s the least we need in order to make an opera? A Body. Something that allows us to view this body, let’s say light. And you, the audience. Now what if the body had a voice? Now what if that voice was not the voice of the original body? Now what if the voice did belong to the body but was not created within the *mind* of the body. Is it true if it’s a re-creation... if it is a decontextualized reverberation?

And what if, forgive us, there was music?

Text for this work was either adapted or gleaned from the following sources: *Samedi the Deafness* : Jesse Ball *The Queen of Versailles*, documentary *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, A Heated Debate on Abortion (1989) *Charlie Rose* : Interview with Dolly Parton (2009) *Judee Sill* : from Rolling Stone Interview and concert bootlegs.

### **Alexandra Hay – *Metanoia***

*Metanoia* seeks to extend the role of composer and performer to the player as they trace their own path through the game.

**Constantin Basica – *Knot an Opera!***

OPERA? OPERA WHAT? WHAT IS THIS? IS THIS OPERA? – ~~This opera~~ This work ~~knots~~ binds operatic practices with elements from old and new media (e.g. TV, YouTube) into a chain of ~~preposterous~~–ludicrous ~~events~~–episodes. Disparate pieces ~~with~~ of text – original or ~~appropriated~~ quoted\* – generate ~~symbols~~ characters and situations on the border between the mundane and the absurd.

#PostOpera #KnowYourMeme #FunnyCats

\*Text, video, and/or audio partially derived from the following sources:

- Fryer, Paul (ed.). “The Business of Opera: Opera, Advertising and the Return to Popular Culture.” In “Opera in the Media Age: Essays on Art, Technology and Popular Culture.” McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2014 (Print)
- “Bud Light Opera Commercial” + comments (YouTube)
- “Laura Bretan: 13-Year-Old Opera Singer Gets the Golden Buzzer - America’s Got Talent 2016 Auditions” (YouTube)
- Eight reaction videos to Laura Bretan’s performances at America’s Got Talent (YouTube)
- “Yosemitebear Mountain Double Rainbow 1-8-10” (YouTube)
- “Dinner Party” (Prelinger Archives)
- “Cat Birthday Party - Cats Video” (YouTube)
- “Random word generator” by James Padolsey (JavaScript)

Special thanks to Teodor Basica and Simona Fitcal for all their help in the making of this work.

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**BIOGRAPHIES**

**CONSTANTIN BASICA** is a Romanian composer currently living in the San Francisco Bay Area, whose current work explores perceptual illusions in the context of audiovisual performance. His compositions include pieces for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, and orchestra. In recent years, he has been composing multimedia works for acoustic instruments, electronics, and video, which have been performed in Europe and in the United States by artists such as Séverine Ballon, Tony Arnold, ELISION Ensemble, Ensemble Dal Niente, Ensemble Liminar, Now Hear Ensemble, JACK Quartet, Spektral Quartet, and Splinter Reeds. Constantin is the Alejandro and Lida Zaffaroni graduate fellow at Stanford University, where he is working with Jaroslaw Kapuscinski and Brian Ferneyhough toward a DMA in Composition. He is also studying with Mark Applebaum and Erik Ulman. His previous mentors were Georg Hajdu and Manfred Stahnke at the Hamburg University of Music and Theatre in Germany, as well as Dan Dediú and Bogdan Voda at the National University of Music Bucharest in Romania. In 2016, Constantin was one of the lecturers at the Sound and Music Computing Summer School in Hamburg and, in 2015, he received the Department of Music Chair’s Award for Excellence in Teaching at Stanford University. Between 2008-2009, he was appointed Professor of Orchestra at the “George Enescu” National College of Music in Bucharest.

## BIOGRAPHIES

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**KYLE ADAM BLAIR** is an active pianist, vocal coach, and music director in the San Diego area, specializing in the performance of American contemporary music. His focuses include the performance of new works in collaboration with composers and the performance of works from the middle-to-late 20th century. Blair, in addition to his passion for solo piano performances, actively pursues opportunities to collaborate in theatrical realms. He has been involved with productions of *The Threepenny Opera* (UC San Diego Music/kallisti, music director/pianist), *The Cherry Orchard* (UC San Diego Theatre and Dance, music director/composer/pianist), and premieres of *Casagemas* (Wagner New Play Festival, music director), *Borealis* (WNPF, composer), and *Movers and Shakers* (music director/pianist). As a collaborative pianist, Blair was named a New Music Fellow for SongFest 2014 at The Colburn School (Los Angeles), where he collaborated with soprano Tiffany DuMouchelle and other vocalists, performing in numerous concerts and master classes with noted performers Lucy Shelton, Susanne Mentzner, Lisa Saffer, D'Anna Fortunato, Sanford Sylvan, Rudolf Piernay, and pianists Craig Rutenberg, Lisa Stepanova, Lucas Wong, and Kathleen Tagg. His other collaborations have included two concerts with Bang-On-A-Can All-Stars at the Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Conrad Prebys Music Center, numerous appearances with the La Jolla Symphony under the direction of Steven Schick, and premieres of solo and chamber works of San Diego composers Xavier Beteta, Hunjoo Jung, and Jon Forshee. He has also collaborated with noted American composers Steve Reich, Christian Wolff, and Stuart Saunders Smith. He commissioned and premiered Smith's longest piano work to date, the four-movement *Palm Sunday* in 2014. Blair is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Contemporary Music Performance at UC San Diego under the mentorship of Aleck Karis.

**ASHLEY CUTRIGHT**, mezzo soprano, is enjoying her second year in the doctoral program in the music department at UC San Diego under the tutelage of Susan Narucki. Ashley made her Enid Symphony debut earlier this year in the title role of *Carmen*. This is quickly becoming a signature role, as she also played the famous Gypsy woman in a production with Opera Neo in San Diego last summer. Other roles include Stephano in *Romeo et Juliet*, Tisbe in *La Cenerentola*, Catherine Wright in *Shining Brow*, Chief Elder in *The Giver*, Jordan Baker in *The Great Gatsby* (Tulsa Opera); Florence Pike in *Albert Herring* (Opera on the Avalon); Sister Mathilde in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, Olga in *Eugene Onegin* (Des Moines Metro Opera); Cecilia March in *Little Women*, Alisa in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Opera North); Katisha in *The Mikado* (Skylark Opera); Ottavia in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and Berta in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Pensacola Opera).

**ALEX HAY** is an explorer and celebrant of the feats and struggles of the human condition. She has an undergraduate degree from Victoria University (Wellington, New Zealand) and a doctorate in music composition from Stanford University. She continues her journey via the natural sciences into the field of medicine.

**JESSIE MARINO** is a composer/performer/media artist from Long Island, New York. Her current work explores the virtuosity of common activities, ritualistic absurdity, and the archeology of recent media. Her pieces rigorously score out sound, physical movements, lighting and staging and place them within highly organized time structures and musical formats.

**CAROLINE LOUISE MILLER's** work reflects her fascination with tactility, sociality, wildness, excess, violence, and dreams. She relishes instability; ornamentation; mashup and remix art, glitchy sound, jagged transitions; contrasting materials (or even entire songs) that are layered atop one another; and sound-worlds evoking late Romanticism. As of late, her written research focuses on the intersection between digital glitch aesthetics, materiality, and tactility in post-dubstep electronica. Since 2012, she has organized and curated annual concerts at the Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. C.L.M.'s music has appeared around the world. She has enjoyed performances by Forest Collective, WasteLAnd, Wild Rumpus Ensemble, members of the Lyris Quartet, and the Inoo-Kallay Duo; and her works have most recently appeared at SeaM Festival für Elektroakustische Music, NYCEMF, Hear Now Festival, SEAMUS, SoundSCAPE, The Only Way is Ethics Festival Glasgow, Studio 300 Digital Art and Music festival, and UCSD's own Springfest. Elliptic for percussion, piano and electronics is published on Populist Records. Caroline is a Ph.D. candidate in music composition at UC San Diego. Her committee consists of Katharina Rosenberger, Amy Cimini, Miller Puckette, Anthony Burr, and Ricardo Dominguez. She currently lives and works in San Diego, California.

Baritone **JONATHAN NUSSMAN** is a specialist in contemporary music and opera who has performed extensively on both the East and West Coasts. Appearances include Cape Cod Opera, Opera Boston, Guerilla Opera, Juventas New Music Ensemble and Boston Modern Orchestra Project, as well as featured performances with the Cambridge Symphony Orchestra and the soundSCAPE New Music Festival in Maccagno, Italy. As a performer of contemporary works, he has premiered new pieces by such composers as Nicholas Vines, Andy Vores, Marti Epstein, Brian Hulse, Alla Cohen, Rudolph Rojahn, John Bavicchi and Harold Farberman. Notable operatic roles in his repertoire include Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Larry Foreman (*The Cradle Will Rock*), John Brooke (*Little Women*) Sid (*Albert Herring*) and Mack (*The Threepenny Opera*). Originally from Charlotte, North Carolina, he is now pursuing a doctoral degree in contemporary music performance at UC San Diego, where he studies under Philip Larson.



## BIOGRAPHIES

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**JASON PONCE** is an intermedia artist, musician, and interactive arts researcher. As a musician, his work embraces composition, improvisation, noise, drone, and microsound. Jason's sound and video installations have been produced internationally and are motivated by the prospect of augmenting encounters with art and music via interactive processes that link technology with the human body. In addition to collaborating with the Kallisti Ensemble, Jason has worked closely with many other contemporary artists and organizations, including the International Contemporary Ensemble, Ensemble Sospeso, Studio für Elektroakustische Musik Bauhaus Universität, Spark Festival of Electronic Music and Art, STEIM, and the Center for New Music and Audio Technology (CNMAT). He holds advanced degrees from UC San Diego where he studied composition and computer music with Miller Puckette, F. Richard Moore, and Philippe Manoury.

Soprano **KIRSTEN ASHLEY WIEST** is “a new music natural” (Jeffrey Holmes, composer) committed to the continuous evolution of classical vocal music. Her “wonderful voice, not like anyone else” (American Composers Forum) has captured the attention of many composers, resulting in numerous world premiere performances. Kirsten has sung as a soloist with the Grammy-winning Partch ensemble, the Industry opera company, YMF Debut Orchestra, La Jolla Symphony and Chorus, wild Up new music collective, UC Los Angeles John Cage Symposium, UC San Diego's Palimpsest, CalArts New Century Players Ensemble, and Chapman University's New Music Ensemble. She has also performed with Bang on a Can All-Stars, red fish blue fish, San Diego Pro Arte Voices, the Metroplex Opera Company in Dallas, and the Texas 'Lone Star' Ambassadors of Music. Currently a DMA student at UC San Diego under the instruction of Susan Narucki, Kirsten holds a MFA from CalArts and a BM cum laude from Chapman University's Conservatory of Music.

Soprano **HILLARY JEAN YOUNG** was born in Grand Forks, British Columbia. As a homeschooler, they developed an interest in music and voice at a young age, beginning their post-secondary studies at the age of 16. From the studio of Nancy Hermiston, Hillary received their Masters of Music in Opera from the University of British Columbia in May 2014. Hillary has received several prestigious scholarships and awards, including the Roberto and Mary Wood Scholarship, the San Diego District Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Encouragement Award, and the LA Songfest New Music Fellowship. Hillary has participated in several summer vocal programs such as LA SongFest 2015, the Vancouver International Song Institute, the Centre for Opera Studies in Sulmona, Italy, and UBC Opera's own tours to Ontario and the Czech Republic. Hillary's operatic experience includes roles such as Cis in Britten's *Albert Herring*, First Wood Sprite in Dvořák's *Rusalka*, the title role in Janáček's *Příhody lišky Bystroušky*, and *La Modista* in Rota's *Il cappello di paglia di Firenze*. In addition, their interpretation of Jenny in Weill's *The Threepenny Opera* was hailed as “showing both the acidity and the humanity at the core of this work” (UT San Diego). Hillary is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in Contemporary Music Performance at the University of California San Diego under the tutelage of Susan Narucki.