

Wednesdays @ 7

Mark Dresser - In the Shadow of a Mad King

Solo and Duo Improvisations and Compositions

Wednesday, May 11, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Music Center, Experimental Theater

Deep Tones for Peace
Text by William Parker
Mark Dresser, bass

Diagonalia
Mark Dresser, bass

Within a Half
Mark Dresser, bass

Matthias Ziegler, bass and contrabass flute, telematically performing from Stäfa, Switzerland

Tination (solo works for prepared contrabass)
Mark Dresser, bass

Gloaming
Mark Dresser, bass
Michael Dessen, trombone

Hobby Lobby Horse
Mark Dresser, bass
Michael Dessen, trombone

Intermission

In the Shadow of A Mad King (Concert Version)
Poetry and reading, Jerome Rothenberg
Mark Dresser, bass

FANFARE after Shelley
LIES
FACES
THE LONELY DEAD
CODA

Program Notes:

Deep Tones for Peace is an improvised invocation with words by bassist/composer/author William Parker.

Diagonalia is a new work focused on the musical application of 'kinetic' multiphonics.

Within a Half (2022) Tonight's performance features a telematic duo with my long-time collaborator, Matthias Ziegler from Zürich. Originally composed for the UCSD bass ensemble, it focuses on the harmony, microtonal melodies within the overtones of a half step, (partials 6, 7, 8, 9) as well as the metrical and polyrhythmic translations.

Tination (2019) I commissioned luthier Kent McLagan, in 2015 to build a bass for me with embedded magnetic pick-ups into the neck and a new idea; an array of metal tines attached to the bridge with the intent of opening up a new palette of sound and pitch. Over the past 7 years there have been 10 different iterations of this idea and multiple recordings. *Tination* is a series of improvised dialogues complementing and contrasting the distinct colors and pitch worlds of the McLagan tines.

Gloaming (2018) is a kind of a parametric waltz. It is the fourth in a series of pieces I've written using multiple levels of polyrhythm which expand and contract within shifting meters. A two-voiced bass line underpins an undulating trombone melody, sounding as if it might be improvised. Layers continue to be introduced between solos into an extended song form.

Hobby Lobby Horse (2016) is a musical response to the 'religulous' (thanks Bill Maher) Oklahoma-based, gigantic chain crafts store Hobby Lobby. The composition plays with a purposefully idiosyncratic groove of accumulating phrases of 13 and 15 with a contrasting melody. As a vehicle for improvisation, the instrumental solos navigate a metric form with surprise interruptions.

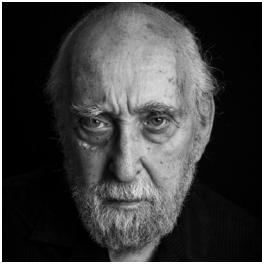
In the Shadow of a Mad King (Concert Version) - Jerome Rothenberg. Music by Mark Dresser.

IN THE SHADOW OF A MAD KING: A poem or series of 25 short poems written as a response to the Trumpian decade through which we're still passing. The reference in the opening poem is to Shelley's rant against another mad kingship & fantasizing presence:

And he wore a kingly crown;
And in his grasp a sceptre shone;
On his brow this mark I saw -
I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW

To this, Sadie Rothenberg's full-color illustrations, randomly arranged, add a further dimension, and the concert version conceived with Mark Dresser divides the work into five segments: *Fanfare*, *Lies*, *Faces*, *The Lonely Dead*, and *Coda*.

Artist Bios:



Jerome Rothenberg is an internationally celebrated poet, translator, anthologist, and performer with over ninety books of poetry and twelve assemblages of traditional and avant-garde poetry such as *Technicians of the Sacred*, *Shaking the Pumpkin* (traditional American Indian poetry), *Exiled in the Word* (a.k.a. A Big Jewish Book), and, *Poems for the Millennium*, volumes 1-3. His most recent big books are *Eye of Witness: A Jerome Rothenberg Reader* and *Barbaric Vast & Wild: Outside & Subterranean Poetry from Origins to Present*. A significantly expanded fiftieth anniversary edition of *Technicians of the Sacred* was recently published by the University of California Press, and a new book of poems, *In the Shadow of a Mad King*, with full-color illustrations by Sadie Rothenberg, is scheduled for publication this year by Granary Books.



Michael Dessen is a composer/improviser, trombonist and educator. He creates music for his own bands, collaborates with leading creative artists, performs solo on trombone/computer, and produces telematic concerts and educational projects that explore the potentials of telepresence. Dessen's teachers include Yusef Lateef, George E. Lewis, and Anthony Davis, and he is a professor at the University of California, Irvine, where he co-founded a PhD program in Integrated Composition, Improvisation and Technology (ICIT).



Matthias Ziegler, flutist and Professor at the Zurich University of the Arts, is one of the world's most versatile and innovative flutists. He is committed both to the traditional literature for flute as well as to contemporary music and concepts that cross the boundaries between classical music and jazz. Searching for new sounds he enormously broadened the expressive potential of the traditional flute and the electroacoustically amplified contrabass flute. Inspired by the new dimension of sounds of these instruments, composers such as Michael Jarrell from Switzerland, Benjamin Yusupov from Tadjikistan and the American Mark Dresser wrote flute concertos for him. Since 2013 he has been leading a project for the development of a telematic performance format at Zurich University of Arts.



Mark Dresser is a Grammy nominated, internationally renowned bass player, improviser, and composer. At the core of his music is an obsession and commitment to expanding the sonic, musical, and expressive possibilities of the contrabass. He has recorded over one hundred-fifty CDs including ten CDs as composer/bandleader, five solo recordings and a DVD. From 1985 to 1994, he was a member of Anthony Braxton's Quartet. Since 2007 he has been deeply involved in telematic music performance and education. He was awarded a 2015 & 2018 Shifting Foundation Fellowship and 2015 Doris Duke Impact Award. He is a Distinguished Professor of Music at UC San Diego.