

WEDNESDAYS @ 7 PRESENTS

Changing Light

Music for International Women's Day

Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Music Center | Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Sofia Gubaidulina *Letter to the Poetess Rimma Dalos* (1985)

Kaija Saariaho *Changing Light* (2005)

Susan Narucki, soprano Alex Greenbaum cello

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**Ursula Mamlok**                              *Stray Birds* (1963)  
coloratura soprano, flute, cello

- I. (In a sustained mood)
- II. (Majestic)
- III. (Very airy)
- IV. (In a melancholy mood)
- V. (Still, with utmost simplicity)

Kirsten Ashley Wiest, soprano  
Alex Greenbaum, cello  
Alexander Ishov, flute

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Alba Potes *TRINOS* (2024*)

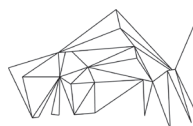
Kaija Saariaho *From the Grammar of Dreams* (1988)

Kirsten Ashley Wiest, Susan Narucki, sopranos

**World premiere*



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including artist biographies and
program notes.



UC San Diego
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Department of Music

PROGRAM NOTES

Vocal chamber music - music written for voices in combination with each other or with a small instrumental component - brings us into a remarkable world of musical expression. We enter a space in which poetry and music are transformed by each other, through the imagination of a composer, and brought to life in an intimate musical form. Each of the four composers of tonight's concert connects to the process in a distinctive way, offering us ways to hear the singing voice in a range of expressions and sounds that we might not have ever anticipated -or imagined to be possible.

Russian composer **Sofia Gubaidulina**, now in her nineties, has written an astonishing array of works, from large scale symphonic and choral works to intimate, eclectic chamber music. Her brief *Letter to the Poet Rimma Dalos* begins with an invocation from the soprano, "My soul - sphinx, my soul - phoenix" followed by an expansive cello solo. Both display Gubaidulina's interest in exploring fine gradations of instrumental and vocal color, combined with strong, wide-ranging phrases, evocative of a ritual.

Finnish composer **Kaija Saariaho**, who passed away in 2023 at the age of 70, was one of the recognized internationally for her achievements in a wide variety of musical genres, including large scale operas, instrumental and vocal works and music with electronics. Her compositions for voice are often characterized by fluidity in form and intense emotional expression. We present two of her works for voice on this evening's program. The first, *Changing Light*, written for a solo voice and a single instrument, exists in several different versions. The music is contemplative and straightforward; it is reflection on the grandeur of nature as well as a prayer for transformation.

German-American composer **Ursula Mamlok** (1923-2016) was an essential voice in the modernist New York scene of the mid 20th century as well as an important teacher of composition. With exquisite attention to balance in form and attuned to fine gradations of instrumental and vocal color, her *Stray Birds*, for coloratura soprano, flute and cello, are jewel-like settings of poems of Rabindranath Tagore, and were written in memory of John F. Kennedy.

Colombian born composer **Alba Potes'** distinctive music combines beautifully defined formal structures, with a subtle underpinning of Latin American traditional music. She is one of Ursula Mamlok's most distinguished mentees. Her *TRINOS* (Trills) is a setting of twelve short poems by the poet Javier Tafur Gonzalez. The movements vary widely in character, from playful to elegiac, intimate to expansive, with a musical language that makes use of quarter tone tuning and expressive juxtapositions of the voices. Commissioned by Susan Narucki, *TRINOS* will be given its world premiere this evening.

From the Grammar of Dreams is one of Saariaho's best known works for voices. Set to a poetry by the American poet Sylvia Plath, it is a dreamscape come to life. Within the five movements, the two voices wind together in distinct and unlikely combinations. The movements describe the waking from a bad dream, searching for one's home, the exquisite scent of a magnolia flower, a swimmer testing her limits, a final trill of happiness. There is ecstasy, terror and beauty, all built on a castle of vibrating air.

I think of this concert as a celebration of connections, across generations, cultures and ideas. Interconnections abound; the composers represented on this concert, all of them women, have made substantial contributions to the history of noted contemporary music. I am proud to continue to illuminate their music and their accomplishments through this performance, and am grateful for the musicians on this concert, Kirsten, Alex and Sasha, for their dedication and excellence.

- Susan Narucki, March 2024

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



American soprano **SUSAN NARUCKI** has earned international acclaim as a singer of luminous tone, superb musicianship and distinctive artistry, enjoying close collaborations with many of the world's leading composers. She has appeared as a soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, MET Chamber Ensemble, on the Great Performers Series at Lincoln Center, and at Carnegie Hall and with conductors Pierre Boulez, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Michael Tilson Thomas, Oliver Knussen, Reinbert de Leeuw, Herbert Blomstedt, and Kent Nagano. The soprano has been a featured soloist with contemporary music ensembles across the globe and appeared at major European festivals in Berlin, Brussels, Paris, Warsaw, Torino, London, Vienna, Lisbon, Munich and Amsterdam. Ms. Narucki made her Netherlands Opera debut creating the role of Catherina Bolnes in Louis Andriessen's *Writing to Vermeer* and traveled with the production to the Adelaide and Lincoln Center Festivals.

Ms. Narucki's extensive discography includes a 2000 Grammy award for George Crumb's *Star-Child* (Bridge) two additional Grammy nominations for Best Classical Vocal Recording, most recently in 2019 for *The Edge of Silence: Music of Gyorgy Kurtag* (AVIE). She has been a driving force in commissioning, producing, and performing of chamber operas that illuminate critical issues in society, including *Cuatro Corridos* (2013) and *Inheritance* (2018). Her projects have earned major philanthropic support from the MAP Fund /Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, UC MEXUS, Creative Capital Foundation, New Music USA and multiple awards from the National Endowment for the Arts. Susan Narucki serves as a Distinguished Professor of Music at UC San Diego.



Award-winning coloratura soprano, **KIRSTEN ASHLEY WIEST**, is firmly committed to the continuous evolution of classical vocal music. Her "extraordinary performance virtuosity" (Sequenza 21) and "bright, dazzling vocal technique" (San Diego Story) have captivated composers worldwide, resulting in over 80 world premiere performances and premiere recordings including works by Veronika Krausas (CA/US), James Erber (UK), Gérard Pape (FR), Jeffrey Holmes (US), and Grawemeyer Award-winner Lei Liang (CN/US).

Kirsten has sung with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Diego Symphony, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Grammy-winning Partch ensemble, Hear Now Festival of New Music, wild Up new music collective, and La Jolla Symphony and Chorus, among many others. She has performed at venues including Walt Disney Concert Hall (CA), REDCAT (CA), Aratani Japan America Theater (CA), Théâtre Le Palace (FR), Autonomous University of Baja California (MX), and the Moore Theater (WA). Kirsten has given solo recitals on concert series hosted by Tuesdays@MONK, Boston Court Pasadena, Harvey Mudd College, Chapman University, and others. She was a featured soloist in the LA Philharmonic's season-long installation, *Nimbus*, and has recorded for several interactive operatic experiences and film scores including *Malignant* and the *Conjuring* series. Her voice can be heard on recordings released by Sony Classical, Centaur Records, MicroFest Records, innova recordings, and Albany Records, among others.

Kirsten holds a DMA in Contemporary Music Performance UC San Diego and an MFA from California Institute of the Arts. Alongside performing, Kirsten teaches voice at San Bernardino Valley College and University of California Riverside.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Born in New York, cellist **ALEX GREENBAUM** enjoys a diverse and adventurous musical life as a performer, educator and arts leader. As cellist of the Hausmann Quartet he is a Lecturer and Artist-in-Residence at San Diego State University, where he teaches cello and chamber music. As a long-time member of The Knights he has performed throughout the U.S. and Europe, from New York to Vienna, Ireland, Germany and the Canary Islands, and appeared at the festivals of Aix-en-Provence, Caramoor, Dresden, Ojai, Ravinia, Tanglewood, Salzburg and in recent seasons returned to Vienna's Musikverein and the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg. He has recorded for Ancalagon, ARC, Bridge, Canary Classics, Cantaloupe, In a Circle, Koch, Mack Avenue Records, Naxos, Warner Classics and Sony records.

His varied interests have led to recordings for film, television and commercials, studies of early music, performances throughout Mexico and collaborations with dance companies including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Shen Wei Dance Arts, Pilobolus, Malashock Dance and the Mark Morris Dance Group.

Locally, Alex is a founding member of San Diego Baroque, a mainstay on the Art of Élan series, a member of Bach Collegium San Diego and Co-Director of Chamber Music at the Athenaeum Music & Arts Library in La Jolla. A dedicated advocate for new music, past associations include the Tarab Cello Ensemble and Hutchins East, performances with the FLUX Quartet, Newband, at Music at the Anthology (MATA) and as a member of the Orquesta Sinfonica Sinaloa de las Artes and Tucson Symphony Orchestra. His teachers have included Steven Doane, Marcy Rosen, Ross Harbaugh, Joseph Elworthy and Andre Emelianoff. Alex plays a cello crafted in 2006 by Michele Ashley and a baroque cello labeled Claude Vuillaume, 1788.



ALEXANDER ISHOV is a flutist, music educator, and researcher currently pursuing a Doctorate in Contemporary Music Performance at UC San Diego. New music performances include the Ojai Music Festival, SoundSCAPE, June at Buffalo, and Renga ensemble.

Alexander is deeply interested in the intersection between human-centric interface design, accessible and inclusive pedagogy, and electronics. His research explores the communicative function of design within the music studio. He recently released his first chamber music album, "Crippled Symmetry: Live in

La Jolla," a recording of Morton Feldman's evening-length minimalist work for flute/bass flute, vibraphone/glockenspiel, and piano/celeste, featuring Ashley Zhang and Michael Jones.

Alexander holds degrees from UC San Diego, the Eastman School of Music, and Interlochen Arts Academy. Primary flute mentors include Wilfrido Terrazas, Bonita Boyd, Anne Lindblom Harrow, Nancy Stagnitta, Dr. Kristen Stoner, and Christine Alicot. Alexander is a Miyazawa Emerging Artist.