

Saturday, September 18, 2021 at 7:30pm
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

Sō Percussion

Eric Cha-Beach, Josh Quillen, Adam Sliwinski, and Jason Treuting

Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence

with **Shodekeh Talifero**, Beatboxer

JULIA WOLFE
(b. 1958)

Dark Full Ride (2002)
Movement 1

DOMINIC SHODEKEH TALIFERO
(b. 1977)

*Vodalities: Paradigms of Consciousness
for the Human Voice* (2021)

I. “The Universality of Breath Art”
(Dedicated to Bobby McFerrin)

II. “The Geneology of Vocal Percussion”
(Dedicated to Ella Fitzgerald)

JASON TREUTING
(b. 1977)

extremes (2009)

PAULINE OLIVEROS
(1932-2016)

Sonic Meditations (1989)
Rolling Meditation

BRYCE DESSNER
(b. 1976)

Music for Wood and Strings (2013)

This program will be performed without an intermission.

While inside the hall, all guests must wear a properly fitting mask over their nose and mouth.

The use of photographic, video or audio equipment is strictly prohibited.

Please turn off or mute electronic devices for the duration of the performance.

JULIA WOLFE*Dark Full Ride* (2002)

When Talujon Percussion Quartet asked me to write a piece for 4 percussionists I immediately thought of the drums. I am a long time fan of drummers and their ability to play simultaneously with both hands and feet, so I thought why not four of them? I went to David Cossin's studio to try ideas out. When we got to the hi-hat I became mesmerized. It's an amazing instrument — two cymbals crashing together by means of a foot pedal and struck from above. It produces an enormous range of shimmering colors. Just opening and closing the cymbals allow for symphonic possibilities. You can play the cymbals on the edge, play on the bell (top), roll, attack, be delicate, and my favorite — make the hi-hat roar. The first seven minutes of the piece are entirely on hi-hats. Then I add in cymbals. That's where the title of the piece comes from — it was printed on the back of one of the ride cymbals. From there the piece spreads out to the drums, eventually leading to a cacophony of conflicting pounding speeds on the whole drum set. Towards the end of *Dark Full Ride* the four players are playing beats at different tempos while speeding up and slowing down relative to each other.

—Julia Wolfe

DOMINIC SHODEKEH TALIFERO*Vodalities: Paradigms of Consciousness for the Human Voice* (2021)

Commissioned for Sō Percussion.

Vodalities: Paradigms of Consciousness for the Human Voice seeks to illuminate the different modalities of the vocal arts utilized by not only composer and performing artist Shodekeh Talifero, but vocalists the world over. Through three movements composed specifically for Sō Percussion, with each focused on the vocal modalities, or “vodalities” of Breath Art, Vocal Percussion & Beatboxing, Sō's challenge was to listen to, learn (and of course enjoy) each vocal movement, transcribe the pieces from a Hip Hop-based oral tradition construct to a system of western notation and finally through “technique transcription”, figure out which physical, percussion-based instruments and which members of the ensemble using those tools would be best suited to play each element of the overall compositional structure. In other words, welcome to the 21st century, where compositional paradigms and a synthesis of learning styles can take on a whole new reversal of impact, influence and imagination.

—Dominic Shodekeh Talifero

JASON TREUTING

extremes (2009)

extremes was written in 2009 as a part of Sō Percussion's evening length work, *Imaginary City*. *Imaginary City* was commissioned by six performing art centers in six different cities and the rhythms in *extremes* come from those cities: Brooklyn, Burlington, Denver, Helena, Houston, and Cleveland.

Though it is most commonly played around a concert bass drum with cymbals and pitched metal placed on the drum and a few more pitched instruments added alongside the drum, the instrumentation is flexible and can be played in many ways.

—Jason Treuting

PAULINE OLIVEROS

Sonic Meditations (1989)

Listening is still a mysterious process that takes place in the brain after the ear hears and delivers waveforms transformed into electrical impulses that activate collections or networks of neurons. Networks are formed by neurons that fire together. My interest in this process led me to create *Sonic Meditations*, my first algorithmic compositions/improvisations.

Sonic Meditations allowed me to include and mix trained and non-trained musicians. Simple instructions could lead to quite complex musical structures. I used *Sonic Meditations* in my classes at the University of California San Diego from 1970 to 1981. Students with no musical training were able to participate effectively — sometimes better than trained musicians.

These pieces focus on directing attention rather than reading notes and practicing until the notes are learned.

Listening practice develops skills at another level.

This radical approach to music making through listening attention and attention to listening has been a rewarding process.

Listening is what shapes the musical mind.

—Pauline Oliveros

BRYCE DESSNER

Music for Wood and Strings (2013)

Commissioned by Carnegie Hall.

Premiered on November 23, 2013 at Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall, New York City.

For several years I have been experimenting with simple chorales in my music that utilize triadic chord inversions that are aligned in complex rhythm patterns to create a kaleidoscopic effect of harmony. These feature heavily in my work for orchestra and two guitars, *St. Carolyn by the Sea* (2011), and the writing for my song cycle, *The Long Count* (2009).

While I have used this technique on guitars and strings, I have not had the opportunity to apply it to percussion instruments. For this new Sō Percussion piece I have been working with instrument builder Aron Sanchez (Blue Man Group, Buke and Gase) to design four dulcimer-like instruments to be played by the quartet. These are simply designed double course string instruments which are played like a dulcimer, but which are specifically built and tuned to implement a more evolved hybrid of the chorale hocket. Each instrument is amplified using piezo pickups and will have 8 double-course strings tuned to two harmonies. With the use of dulcimer mallets, the quartet players can easily sound either harmony, or play individual strings, melodies, and drone tremolos. There are alto, two tenors, and a bass instrument which can play fretted chromatic bass lines. With these elements as well as a few pieces of auxiliary percussion — bass drum, wood block — the work is about 30 minutes long.

—Bryce Dessner

You can hear a new work by Bryce Dessner performed by the Takács String Quartet with bandoneón virtuoso Julien Labro on February 17, 2022 at Princeton University Concerts. Visit puc.princeton.edu for more info.

SŌ PERCUSSION

For twenty years and counting, Sō Percussion has redefined chamber music for the 21st century. They have brought to life vibrant percussion repertoire through an extravagant array of collaborations in classical music, pop, indie rock, contemporary dance, and theater; through their work in education and community engagement; and through creating opportunities and platforms for musicians and artists to explore the immense possibility of art in our time. In the 2021-22 season, Sō Percussion returns to live concerts and continues to develop a range of online programs. In December 2021, they return for their seventh featured concert at Carnegie Hall with an all-star cast of collaborators, including Grammy-winning soprano Dawn Upshaw, pianist Gil Kalish, flutist Nathalie Joachim, beatboxer Shodekeh Talifero, and vocalist/composer Caroline Shaw.

This fall, they will be performing David Lang's *man made* with the Cincinnati Symphony and touring their new Nonesuch Records album *Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part* with Caroline Shaw across the United States. Sō also welcomed a number of critically acclaimed other albums in 2021: Caroline Shaw's *Narrow Sea* on Nonesuch Records, *A Record Of...* on Brassland Music with indie duo Buke and Gase, and a version of Julius Eastman's *Stay On It* on the new Sō Percussion Editions imprint. This adds to a catalogue of more than twenty-five albums featuring landmark recordings of works by David Lang, Steve Reich, Steve Mackey, and many other composers. During the 2020-21 season of remote collaboration, Sō Percussion developed their innovative Flexible Commissions initiative through its New Works Development program, which asks composers to write pieces with multiple possible realizations, unlimited by specific instrumentation and able to be presented live or online in performance. Recent and upcoming Flexible Commissions include works by Bora Yoon, Darian Donovan Thomas, Claire Rousay, Kendall K. Williams, Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti, and Shodekeh Talifero.

Sō Percussion is in its eighth year as Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence at Princeton University. In addition to teaching chamber music, presenting free concerts for the Princeton community, and collaborating with university composers on new works, this year the members of Sō are working with Director of African Music Ensemble Olivier Tarpaga to design and teach a new undergraduate course on rhythm. This course immerses students in rhythmic practices from West African, Caribbean, European, South American, and North American traditions.

Since its first performance as a student ensemble in 1999, Sō Percussion has appeared at many of the most prestigious concert halls and festivals around the world, including Carnegie Hall, the Paris Philharmonie, the Barbican Centre, BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music), Walt Disney Hall with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel, the Lincoln Center Festival, and at the international TED conference in 2016. In 2020, Sō conducted an Amid the Noise residency at the University of Trinidad and Tobago, and performed in the finals of Panorama with the Caribbean Airlines Skiffle Steel Orchestra.

Sō has been featured on WNYC’s Radiolab with Jad Abumrad, NPR’s *Weekend Edition*, NPR Music’s *Tiny Desk Concerts*, and New Sounds with John Schaefer.

Rooted in the belief that music is an elemental form of human communication, and galvanized by forces for social change in recent years, Sō Percussion enthusiastically pursues a growing range of social and community outreach through their nonprofit organization. Their Brooklyn Bound concert series, now in its seventh year, provides a platform for artists from our growing community. The Sō Percussion Summer Institute (“SōSI”), which just completed its thirteenth year, is an intensive two-week chamber music seminar for percussionists and composers featuring community performances, new work development, guest artist workshops, and an annual food-packing drive, yielding 25,000 meals per year for the Crisis Center of Mercer County NJ through the organization End Hunger NE. Sō Percussion has also devoted itself to a range of programs that advance goals and projects in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. These efforts include a studio residency program in Brooklyn, partnerships with other local music organizations, such as Pan in Motion, the donation of proceeds from album sales to Black-led organizations, including Castle of Our Skins, fiscal sponsorship, and inclusive programming.

DOMINIC “SHODEKEH” TALIFERO

Dominic “Shodekeh” Talifero is a groundbreaking beatboxer, vocal percussionist, and breath artist who pushes the boundaries of the human voice within and outside the context of hip-hop music and culture. He formally served as a dance technique musician and composer-in-residence for Towson University’s Department of Dance for 12 years and is the founding director of EMBODY, a festival of the vocal arts. Talifero now serves as Towson University’s first Innovator-in-Residence. In previous years he served as music faculty of the American Dance Festival at Duke University, and has served as the chosen musician for a variety of masterclass experiences led by such luminaries as Ailey II of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Paul Taylor American Modern Dance Ensemble, and the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company. He currently serves as one of the first dance technique musicians of the Peabody BFA Program at Johns Hopkins University.

Over the years, Talifero has moved from beatboxing’s hip-hop roots to explore innovative and convergent collaborations with a wide range of traditional and classical artists. He serves as the beatboxer and vocal percussionist for the globally renowned Alash, one of the world’s leading Tuvan Throat Singing ensembles, and is featured on their recent Smithsonian Folkways album release, *Achai*. He recently became a collaborator with the Silkroad Ensemble, and is serving as the resident beatboxer and cultural ambassador of the local Baltimore chapter of Classical Revolution, following his U.S. premiere performance of Jennah Vanio’s *Fujiko’s Fairy Tale* with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

In recent years, Shodekeh has become immersed in the realm of hip-hop-inspired research and science communication, creating a math and music notation course called Beatbox Algebra. Other collaborations include his compositional and curatorial participation in the remixes of NASA’s Voyager Golden Record, and projects with the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, USA Science & Engineering Festival, and the National Institutes of Health.

**SŌ PERCUSSION WISHES TO THANK
ALL OF THEIR DONORS**

Sō Percussion’s 2021-2022 season is supported in part by awards from:

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Sō Percussion uses Vic Firth sticks, Zildjian cymbals, Remo drumheads, Estey Organs, and Pearl/Adams instruments. Sō Percussion would like to thank these companies for their generous support and donations.



For more information about the Department of Music and other upcoming events, please visit music.princeton.edu.