Vocalist Alicia Olatuja joins Sō Percussion (Princeton University’s Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence) for their spring concert in Richardson Auditorium.

Featuring Caroline Shaw’s Grammy-nominated song cycle Narrow Sea, as well as works by Princeton Faculty Steve Mackey, Darian Donovan Thomas, Cenk Ergün, and Jason Treuting.

As guidelines continue to change, visit musicprincetoninfohub.com/covid on the day of the event for the latest safety requirements.

This program will be performed without an intermission. The use of photographic, video or audio equipment is strictly prohibited. Please turn off or mute electronic devices for the duration of the performance.

For more information about the Department of Music and other upcoming events, and to sign-up for our mailing list, please visit music.princeton.edu.
PROGRAM

Cenk Ergün  
(b. 1978)  
Waves (2022)

Darian Donovan Thomas  
(b.1994)  
Individuate (2020)

Caroline Shaw  
(b.1982)  
Narrow Sea (2017)  
Alicia Olatuja, vocalist

Jason Treuting  
(b. 1977)  
Nine Numbers 8 (2019)

Steve Mackey  
(b. 1956)  
Afterlife (2022)  
Alicia Olatuja, vocalist

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to access an expanded program with bios, notes, and more.
**Waves (2021) – Cenk Ergün**

Waves in everything, everything in waves
12/13 13/13 14/13 15/13
Waves before waves after waves in waves through waves
12/12 13/12 14/12 15/12
Waves of ratios, ratios of waves, ratios of ratios, waves of waves
14/13 13/12 15/13 14/12
Ratios in ratios, everything in everything

—Cenk Ergün

**Individuate (2020) – Darian Donovan Thomas**

“As we individuate, we connect and identify with the entire human family.” Jungian psychology

This work is commissioned through the Sō Percussion New Work Development Program by Sō Percussion and Bergamot Quartet.

**Narrow Sea (2017) – Caroline Shaw**

Narrow Sea places the seeds of old American folk hymns within the unlikely combination of Sō Percussion, Dawn Upshaw, and Gil Kalish. Together they create unique sound worlds with ceramic bowls, flowerpots, humming, and a piano played like a dulcimer. All of the lyrics are from songs found in The Sacred Harp, a collection of shape note hymns first published in the 19th century. These lyrics, set in entirely new melodies, sing about “going home.” Each hymn refers to water in some way, as an image of what lies between this world and the next, and each carries a sense of joy in looking beyond that river. The words reveal our essential human yearning for a home, a safe resting place.

—Caroline Shaw

Commissioned by Music Accord (2017)

**Nine Numbers 8 (2019) – Jason Treuting**

Nine Numbers 8 is an octet for open instrumentation. This piece is the eighth in a set of nine, which are sequenced from solo percussionist to nonet.

All of the pieces in Nine Numbers translate the 9 x 9 solutions of Sudoku puzzles into notes and rhythms. The number nine, with its three sets of three, contains many wonderful symmetries and fractal-like characteristics. It allows for nesting structures at the largest and smallest levels.
In the pieces for fewer players, sometimes I ask the performers to help generate the score. In the solo, duo, and trio, the performers find their own puzzle solutions, and the score is a set of instructions to translate the numbers into music. In this quartet, I present the ensemble with a finished score based on my realization of the Sudoku. Different scores will exist for different ensembles. Most of the recognizable elements of the pieces will remain fixed, but surface details can change depending on the Sudoku.

The complete work of nine pieces will be the second recording of my music on Cantaloupe Music after 2006’s Amid the Noise, featuring performances by Sō Percussion, Tigue, the Meehan/Perkins Duo, Ji Hye Jung, Sandbox Percussion, and Adam Groh.

—Jason Treuting

Afterlife (2022) – Steve Mackey

Afterlife is the third part of Time Cycle, an extended trilogy for voice and percussion ensemble. All three parts reflect on Time in different ways - as a musical parameter, as a relentless measure of our day, as a bittersweet spice in life’s flavor, as the path that connects love and loss, etc. The trilogy spins off the percussion ensemble piece It Is Time (2011). For this third part of Time Cycle, I commissioned Nathaniel Bellows to write a group of poems prompted by loss and reflection with the idea that the piece would be a continuous journey for percussion ensemble, occasionally blossoming into song around the five poems of Nathaniel’s set - also titled Afterlife.

—Steve Mackey
Alicia Olatuja

"Olatuja possesses a special instrument: a full-bodied tone, precise pitch and personal engagement at the lowest whisper or highest wail." —Downbeat

Praised by The New York Times as “a singer with a strong and luscious tone and an amiably regal presence on stage,” Alicia Olatuja has been astounding audiences with her exquisite vocals, artistic versatility, and captivating demeanor. She first came into the national spotlight in 2013, whilst performing as the featured soloist with the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir at President Barack Obama’s Second Inauguration. Shortly thereafter, she assembled her own jazz based ensemble and recorded her first solo album, *Timeless* (2014).

Focusing on the rich contributions of a diverse selection of female composers, Alicia released her sophomore album, *Intuition: From the Minds of Women* in 2019 on the Resilience Music Alliance label. The album celebrates the achievements of a long list of esteemed female composers, while offering a musical perspective unique to Olatuja. She is joined by Kamau Kenyatta and Ulysses Owens Jr. as producers and the material includes songs of Brenda Russell, Sade, Tracy Chapman, Kate Bush, Angela Bofill, and Linda Creed.

Originally from St. Louis, Missouri, Alicia grew up immersed in a wide range of musical styles, including gospel, soul, jazz, and classical. These influences have informed her artistic journey, and she later graduated with a Master’s Degree in Classical Voice/Opera from the Manhattan School of Music. After appearing in numerous operatic and musical theater productions, she started to perform more regularly in gospel and jazz concerts and worked with such esteemed artists as Chaka Khan, BeBe Winans, and Christian McBride.

In 2014, Alicia came to the attention of the acclaimed composer/arranger/pianist Billy Childs, and was brought on to be part of the touring incarnation of “Map to the Treasure: Reimagining Laura Nyro” alongside vocalist Becca Stevens. Her voice has also entranced the legendary Hammond B3 organist Dr. Lonnie Smith, who has invited her to join his band on multiple concerts, including the Charlie Parker Festival, the BRIC JazzFest, Montreal Jazz Festival, and others. Additionally, Alicia is one of three featured vocalists on the Jazz at Lincoln Center commissioned project Songs of Freedom, joining Theo Bleckmann and Dee Bridgewater with music director Ulysses Owens Jr, in exploring the works of Joni Mitchell, Nina Simone, and Abbey Lincoln. The project continues to tour with Alicia and Theo Bleckmann with René Marie and Joanna Majoko alternating the third vocal chair.

Alicia’s own band has been steadily and increasingly in demand. They have performed at the Newport Jazz Festival, Monterey Jazz Festival, Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Jazz Standard, Vermont Jazz Center, SFJAZZ Center, Rockport Jazz Festival, Markham Jazz Festival, Monty Alexander Jazz Fest, Montreal Jazz Festival, and the Harlem Stage Gatehouse, to name a few.
Sō Percussion

For twenty years and counting, Sō Percussion has redefined chamber music for the 21st century through an “exhilarating blend of precision and anarchy, rigor and bedlam” (The New Yorker). They are celebrated by audiences and presenters for a dazzling range of work: for live performances in which “telepathic powers of communication” (The New York Times) bring to life the vibrant percussion repertoire; for an extravagant array of collaborations in classical music, pop, indie rock, contemporary dance, and theater; and for their work in education and community, creating opportunities and platforms for music and artists that 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 returned for their seventh featured concert at Carnegie Hall with an all-star cast of collaborators, including Grammy-winning soprano Dawn Upshaw, pianist Gil Kalish, Nathalie Joachim (recipient of their inaugural Andrew W. Siegel Fellowship), Shodekeh Talifero, Caroline Shaw, and more. 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 Shaw around the United States.

In addition to Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part, Sō welcomed a number of critically acclaimed 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 “moving version” (The New York Times) of Julius Eastman’s Stay On It on new imprint Sō Percussion Editions. 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 in online 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 concerts for the Princeton community, and collaborating with 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 course on rhythm. This course is offered as part of the undergraduate curriculum, exposing students to 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, New Sounds with John Schaefer, and elsewhere.

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, which just completed its thirteenth year, is an intensive two-week chamber music seminar for percussionists and composers. SōSI features 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 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.

**Sō Percussion – is Eric Cha-Beach, Josh Quillen, Adam Sliwinski, and Jason Treuting.**

www.sopercussion.com
Sō Percussion wishes to thank all of their donors. Sō Percussion’s 2021-2022 season is supported in part by awards from:

- The National Endowment for the Arts. To find out more about how National Endowment for the Arts grants impact individuals and communities, visit www.arts.gov
- The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature
- The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council
- The Aaron Copland Fund for Music
- The Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University
- The Amphion Foundation
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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.