

DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC
AT PRINCETON



Tuesday, March 28, 2023, 8:00 PM
Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

Princeton Sound Kitchen presents **Michael J. Love**

Interdisciplinary tap dance artist **Michael J. Love** works with Princeton University faculty composers **Jason Treuting** and **Dan Trueman**, and graduate student composers **Ellie Cherry**, **Kennedy Taylor Dixon**, **Hope Littwin**, and **James Moore** to create an innovative program featuring brand new compositions.

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

James Moore *How to Chase My Blues Away*
Kennedy Taylor Dixon *here I stand*
Hope Littwin *Cathedrals of Production*

INTERMISSION

Dan Trueman *Machines for Listening #5 and #9*
Ellie Cherry *Euphoria*
Jason Treuting *A Better Genome*

PERFORMERS

Michael J. Love, tap dance artist

with guests

JohnPaul Beattie, ambisonic sound

kennedy taylor dixon, viola

James Moore, electronic processing

Study Group: Adam Sliwinski, bitKlavier;

Jason Treuting, drum kit; Dan Trueman, hardanger d'amor

Sō Percussion: Eric Cha-Beach; Josh Quillen;

Adam Sliwinski; Jason Treuting

PROGRAM NOTES

James Moore

How to Chase My Blues Away

James Moore, electronic processing
JohnPaul Beattie, ambisonic sound

I've been enjoying working with Michael to develop a series of improvisational parameters for processed tap-dancing, and I am very excited to see what happens when these powers are combined with those of ambisonic sound wizard JohnPaul Beattie.

The title is taken from the lyrics to Whitney Houston's iconic song *I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Who Loves Me)*. Working up sonic and spatial ideas for this piece, I have also found inspiration from Fred Astaire's classic anti-gravity dance routine to *You're all the World to Me*, Lionel Richie's own take on this idea with *Dancing on the Ceiling*, and the awkward music video to the disco hit *Love is in the Air* by John Paul Young.

kennedy taylor dixon

here I stand

kennedy taylor dixon, viola

here I stand (2021), for improvised viola and fixed media—the black voice (viola) against a white society (fixed media). This piece was in response to the 2020 protests taking place nationwide. The solo viola represents the black voice, being once supported by society (fixed media), however the fixed media quickly begins to overshadow the viola, interrupting phrases to share its opinions—a theme I have seen repeatedly.

Hope Littwin

Cathedrals of Production

INTERMISSION

Dan Trueman

Machines for Listening

#5

#9

Study Group:

Adam Sliwinski, bitKlavier

Jason Treuting, drum kit

Dan Trueman, hardanger d'amor

Machine Listening is an important and complex field, focusing on teaching machines (or having them learn) to listen and parse sound. But what about machines *for* listening, things that invite *us* to listen, teach *us* to listen? This seems particularly pertinent today with all the intense discussion around AI.

The nine sketches in *Machines for Listening* are intended as active listening guides for bitKlavier, a kind of digital musical machine configured in specific ways to process the operator's input and generate sound. Each "listening machine" has specific settings and interconnections that yield sometimes unexpected rhythms and textures, but are in fact completely deterministic—anything that seems like randomness is a product of the specific interactions between operator and machine. They emerged from a long-standing interest of mine: exploring the relationships between musicians and machines.

These are "open form" sketches, providing seeds, specific materials, and intentions for the operator to work with, strictly or loosely. They can be open ended, used at home as listening meditations, or can be the starting points for collaborations with other listeners and instrumentalists, perhaps through collaborative recording, or even live performance. The "operator" may also choose to integrate other instruments or machines into the process, occasionally feeding the listening machines and then reaching out with these others to contribute and listen more deeply.

Machines for Listening were sketched during June of 2020, with the world in imperfect lockdown and raging against centuries of racial injustice: silence is not an option, but listening is required. I'm indebted of course to the legacy of Pauline Oliveros, whom I had the pleasure of playing with many times years ago, and whose "machines for listening" are monumental. The cover artwork that I used for the score is from a piece by my mother, Judy Trueman, that she used for her holiday card in the year 2000, a month after my daughter was born in Kingston NJ; in it she wrote "Happy Holidays to you two, the Princess of Kingston, the World, and the Universe." We are in this together, after all.

For the past year, Jason, Adam, and I have been exploring these machines informally: listening, asking questions, experimenting, trying things... studying. And we decided early on that we would NOT make performing a priority, but rather focus on just the music-making and listening we can do together: Study Group was born. But the temptation to perform can be

irresistible, so here we are tonight, prompted by the opportunity to deepen our studying with Michael J. Love joining us, which has been an extraordinary—and eye-opening—pleasure!

Ellie Cherry

Euphoria

The current popular dialogue on trans issues from a cis perspective has a heavy focus on the negative motivation for transitioning, namely gender dysphoria. But this one-sided understanding of the trans experience as something rooted in discomfort and distress detracts from the presence of positive motivation as an equally, if not more powerful incentive for transitioning. I wrote (gender) *Euphoria* in collaboration with my two trans friends, River and Steve, in celebration of the beauty of feeling at home in your body and loving yourself. I am deeply grateful for the presence of River and Steve in my life as inspiring examples of what it means to be authentically yourself and freely enjoy what makes you happy. I hope that *Euphoria* helps shed light on the trans experience as something positive and empowering—an example of transcending restrictions and norms that we can all look up to.

“I encourage the audience to digest the piece not only as an outward portrayal of others, but also an opportunity to look inward and explore ignored aspects of themselves.”

— Steve

“When I was first beginning to explore my gender in high school, I tentatively asked friends to try out ‘they’ or ‘he’ pronouns for me. I had not begun any kind of physical transition whatsoever. For a few weeks my friends only tried using ‘they / them’ pronouns. It wasn’t until one day, one of my friends took the leap and used ‘he’ for me, that I felt a rush of understanding. It was the joy of hearing that my true self could actually exist in the real world that allowed me to commit to the transition I needed. It was never the discomfort or distress that did that.”

— River

Jason Treuting

A Better Genome

Sō Percussion:

Eric Cha-Beach

Josh Quillen

Adam Sliwinski

Jason Treuting

In the fall of 2022, Sō Percussion got one of the strangest commissions / gigs we've ever gotten / played. As we were coming out of a time of not so many strange commissions / gigs, we jumped in. We were asked to make a short piece based on the human genome to open a conference in San Diego. We made a 3-minute piece for percussion based on the first slice of genome we found online, commonly notated as GTGCATCTGACTCCTGAG. We liked the music but didn't like the gig, so when we looked for a jumping off point for a work with Michael J. Love, for Sō plus tap dancer, we expanded on these and more ideas.

Coming out of this period of not so many collaborations / gigs, we couldn't ask for a more fearless and genuine creative partner than Michael. The process has been exhilarating for the four of us in Sō and we are excited to share the results tonight.

ABOUT

JohnPaul Beattie is a spatial music composer, Adjunct Associate Professor, and Director of Music Technology for the School of Music at University of the Arts. He earned his MFA in Music Composition from Vermont College of Fine Arts in 2018. Beattie has received a research grant exploring the emotional impact of spatial audio from the Center for Immersive Media and the Corzo Center for the Creative Economy at UArts. Beattie also received the President’s Award for Excellence—a microgrant to build a spatial audio controller prototype, of his own design—to aid his research. Beattie is currently teaching Binaural Recording, Spatial Music Composition, Introduction to Acoustics, Introduction to Audio Programming, and Audio Programming II at University of the Arts.

Ellie Cherry is an electroacoustic composer fundamentally compelled by the belief that as an artist she is first and foremost an observer: be it the acoustic properties of the bark of a beech tree or the childhood experiences of an audience member, every element in our shared reality is worthy of consideration. Her composition therefore takes a holistic approach, in which spectral theory, physics, psychoacoustics, and historical and political context are all thoughtfully intertwined. She is particularly interested in exploring how new music composition can provide an effective platform for activism, frequently addressing topics such as environmentalism, gender and class inequality, and trauma.

Described as a “vibrant musical voice,” **Kennedy Taylor Dixon** is a violist, composer and scholar currently pursuing a PhD in Music Composition at Princeton University. Some recent highlights of her career include receiving the Hear & Now Commission for Emerging BIPOC Composers (Westminster College, April 2023), a commission through Castle of our Skins and the Boston Children’s Chorus (May 2023), a premiere at Electric Music Midwest (*here I stand*, 2022), and attending Bang on a Can Festival 2022 as a Performance Fellow. Dixon’s work mainly consists of graphic notation and handwritten scores. This allows for players of her work to explore and interact with the music in unique ways. Drawing inspiration from Wadada Leo Smith’s work, Dixon challenges her performers to think outside the lines and creating a sound world that is new and special each time. Dixon holds a MA in Music Composition in addition to her dual undergraduate degrees in viola performance and music composition from Western Michigan University. This fall, Dixon will be starting her PhD in Music Composition at Princeton University.

American composer and music producer **Hope Littwin** grew up in dance and theater before she took to music, first as a singer-songwriter then as a classical singer and now as a composer and music producer. She loves to collaborate with artists of all kinds on big, daring, expressive works. Hope’s compositions fuse chamber music, songwriting, free jazz and electronics. She has been commissioned by choirs, chamber ensembles and theater and dance companies to create original works that combine electronics, acoustic instruments, vocals with a strong poetic narrative. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Music Composition at Princeton University. Hope’s original works (including *Songs of Communal Becoming*,

Kitchen Dances and *Colonize Mars*) are available for streaming on Bandcamp and YouTube, albums (*Wild Beast*, *Husk* and others) can be found on Spotify and iTunes. Find Hope on instagram @hopelittwin

Michael J. Love is an interdisciplinary tap dance artist, scholar, and educator. His embodied research intermixes Black queer feminist theory and aesthetics with a rigorous practice that critically engages the Black cultural past as it imagines Black futurity. Currently, Love is a 2021 – 2023 Princeton University Arts Fellow and Lecturer at Princeton’s Lewis Center for the Arts. Most recently, he was one of four dancers / choreographers featured in visual artist, filmmaker, and curator Tiona Nekkia McClodden’s multidisciplinary exhibition *The Trace Of An Implied Presence* at The Shed in New York. Love’s work has been supported and presented by Fusebox Festival and ARCOS Dance and his writing has been published in the journal *Choreographic Practices*. Love has collaborated with anti-disciplinary, film-based artist Ariel “Aryel” René Jackson on video and performance projects that have been screened by The Museum of Modern Art and the New Museum in New York; featured in *The New York Times Style Magazine’s* #TBlackArtBlackLife Instagram series; and programmed by Big Medium in Austin, Digital Arts Resource Centre’s Project Space in Ottawa, CUE Art Foundation in New York, the Galleries at the University of Northern Colorado, and the Jacob Lawrence Gallery at the University of Washington. Love and Jackson were the recipients of the 2021 Tito’s Vodka Prize. Love’s performance credits include the Broadway laboratory for Savion Glover and George C. Wolfe’s *Shuffle Along...* and roles in works by Baakari Wilder. Love holds an MFA in Performance as Public Practice from The University of Texas at Austin and is an alumnus of Emerson College. Web: dancermlove.com | Instagram: @dancermlove

James Moore is a composer, guitarist, and bandleader who is currently in his fifth year of the composition program at Princeton. James writes music for an eclectic community of artists, and performs extensively as a chamber musician, soloist, and collaborator in theater, dance, and multimedia projects. He can often be found playing with the raucous electric guitar quartet Dither, the whimsical acoustic group The Hands Free, and the avant-grunge / sloppy-math band Forever House.

Adam Sliwinski has built a dynamic career of creative collaboration as percussionist, pianist, conductor, teacher, and writer. He specializes in bringing composers, performers, and other artists together to create exciting new work. A member of the ensemble Sō Percussion (proclaimed as “brilliant” and “consistently impressive” by *The New York Times*) since 2002, Adam has performed at venues as diverse as Carnegie Hall, The Bonnaroo Festival, Disney Concert Hall with the LA Philharmonic, and everything in between. Sō Percussion has also toured extensively around the world, including multiple featured performances at the Barbican Centre in London, and tours to France, Germany, The Netherlands, South America, Australia, and Russia. Adam has been praised as a soloist by *The New York Times* for his “shapely, thoughtfully nuanced account” of David Lang’s marimba piece *String of Pearls*. He has performed as a percussionist many times with the International Contemporary Ensemble, founded by classmates from Oberlin. Though he trained primarily as a percussionist, Adam’s first major solo album, released on New Amsterdam records in 2015, is a collection of etudes called *Nostalgic Synchronic* for the Prepared Digital Piano, an invention of Princeton

colleague Dan Trueman. In recent years, Adam's collaborations have grown to include conducting. He has conducted over a dozen world premieres with the International Contemporary Ensemble, including residencies at Harvard, Columbia, and NYU. In 2014, ECM Records released the live recording of the premiere of Vijay Iyer's *Radhe Radhe* with Adam conducting. Adam writes about music on his blog. He has also contributed a series of articles to newmusicbox.org, and the *Cambridge Companion to Percussion* from Cambridge University press features his chapter 'Lost and Found: Percussion Chamber Music and the Modern Age.' Adam is co-director of the Sō Percussion Summer Institute, an annual intensive course on the campus of Princeton University for college-aged percussionists. He is also co-director of the percussion program at the Bard College Conservatory of Music, and has taught percussion both in masterclass and privately at more than 80 conservatories and universities in the USA and internationally. Along with his colleagues in Sō Percussion, Adam is Edward T. Cone performer-in-residence at Princeton University. He received his Doctor of Musical Arts and his Masters degrees at Yale with marimba soloist Robert van Sice, and his Bachelors at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music with Michael Rosen.

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. Recent highlights have included performances at the Elbphilharmonie, Big Ears 2022—where they performed *Amid the Noise*, premiered a new work by Angélica Negrón with the Kronos Quartet, and performed their Nonesuch album with Caroline Shaw, *Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part*—and a return to Carnegie Hall where they performed new collaborations with Nathalie Joachim, and Dominic Shodekeh Talifero. Their Nonesuch recording, *Narrow Sea*, with Caroline Shaw, Dawn Upshaw, and Gilbert Kalish, won the 2022 Grammy for Best Composition. Other albums include *A Record Of...* on Brassland Music with Buke and Gase, and an acclaimed version 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 more. In the summer of 2022, Sō performed at the Music Academy of the West Festival, Newport Classical, at Time Spans in New York, and offered four concerts at Our Festival in Helsinki—including a performance of *Let the Soil...* with Caroline Shaw. Other 2022 - 2023 dates include concerts for Cal Performances, at the Palau de la Musica Catalana in Barcelona, at the Barbican in London, the Kennedy Center, and at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. In fall 2022, Sō Percussion began its ninth year as the Edward T. Cone performers-in-residence at Princeton University. Rooted in the belief that music is an elemental form of human communication, and galvanized by forces for social change in recent years, Sō enthusiastically pursues a range of social and community outreach through their nonprofit organization, including partnerships with local ensembles including Pan in Motion and Castle of Our Skins; their Brooklyn Bound concert series; a studio residency program in Brooklyn;

and the Sō Percussion Summer Institute, an intensive two-week chamber music seminar for percussionists and composers.

Jason Treuting is a composer and performer living in Princeton, NJ, and a member of Sō Percussion, the Edward T. Cone performers in residence at Princeton University.

Dan Trueman is a musician: a fiddler, a collaborator, a teacher, a developer of new instruments, a composer of music for ensembles of all shapes and sizes. He is, among other things, Professor and Chair, Department of Music at Princeton University.



What is PSK?

A lab for Princeton University composers to collaborate with today's finest performers and ensembles, Princeton Sound Kitchen is a vital forum for the creation of new music. Serving the graduate student and faculty composers of the renowned composition program at the Department of Music at Princeton University, PSK presents a wide variety of concerts and events throughout the year.

Upcoming Princeton Sound Kitchen events

Tuesday, April 11, 2023, 8:00 PM, Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

Generals Concert

Princeton University second-year graduate student composers Hope Littwin, Soo Yeon Lyuh, Christian Quiñones, and Justin Wright present new works alongside, and in response to, works by established composers, performed by special guest artists.

Wednesday, April 26, 2023, 8:00 PM, The Forum, Lewis Arts Complex

Felix Kindermann: *Choir Piece*, featuring Natalie Dietterich: *Composition for Separated Musicians*

This performance of Felix Kindermann's *Choir Piece*, featuring Princeton University graduate student composer Natalie Dietterich's a cappella score for 16 singers *Composition for Separated Musicians*, occupies the entire space of The Forum. The audience becomes part of the work, finding themselves inside the sculpture, surrounded by the singers and embedded in the sound.

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Current Season page of our website princetonsoundkitchen.org**