



Friday, September 8, 2023 at 7:30pm  
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

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# SŌ PERCUSSION

New Works from Olivier Tarpaga, Angélica Négron and Jason Treuting

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#### **About the Department of Music:**

The Department of Music at Princeton University provides its undergraduates—whether they major or minor in Music—the opportunity to learn from a world-renowned faculty of scholars and composers. Performance opportunities include student-led and departmental ensembles like symphony orchestras, multi-genre choruses, jazz, contemporary music, African music, steel band, laptop orchestra, and much more, and students have access to private instrumental and voice lessons from eminent performing artists. The graduate program offers two distinct and prestigious Ph.D. programs in composition or musicology; graduate students receive fully-funded, immersive experiences conducting research, advancing their craft, and collaborating with faculty within Princeton University's inspiring, interdisciplinary campus.

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](https://music.princeton.edu).

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## PROGRAM

### **Angélica Negrón**

#### *Inward Pieces*

*(2023, Commissioned by Sō Percussion, Brookby Foundation, New Music USA Creator Development Fund and the Andy Siegel Fellowship)*

*gone*  
*wire*  
*release*  
*go back*

### **Olivier Tarpaga**

#### *Fē Fē*

*(2023, Work in Progress, Co-Commissioned by Carnegie Hall, with lead support from Charles Fournier & Bonnie Litt.)*

*Dusty road to Dolo*  
*Olivier's four in three*

## INTERMISSION

### **Jason Treuting**

#### *Go Placidly With Haste (2023)*

#### **Sō Percussion with friends, including:**

*Beth Meyers - viola and voice*

*Cenk Ergün - electronics*

*Kasey Hao - piano*

*Molly Trueman - voice*

*Kennedy Dixon - viola*

*Travis Laplante - tenor sax*

*Francisco del Pino - electric guitar*

*James Moore - electric guitar*

*Amy Garapic - percussion*

*Angélica Negrón - voice and accordion*

*Olivier Tarpaga - djembe and calabash*

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The use of photographic, video, or audio equipment is strictly prohibited. Please turn off or mute electronic devices for the duration of the performance.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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For [Sō Percussion](#)'s concert on September 8th in Richardson Auditorium, inaugurating our tenth year as the Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence, we are exploring rhythms which transcend their cultural context, flexible pieces of music that turn abstract structures into music, and the presence of electronics, robots, and technology in our everyday lives.

The three composers featured in the program are [Jason Treuting](#), [Angélica Negrón](#), and [Olivier Tarpaga](#); Each are composer-performers (and even choreographers), and each one has distinctive ways of incorporating these trades into their music.

It is the richness of the community in the music department at Princeton that makes these kinds of collaborations possible. Our residency as a percussion ensemble has been unique in the history of American universities, allowing us to reach out to composers, scholars, other artists, and students of all kinds to invent new kinds of repertoire. We are so grateful to our colleagues and students at Princeton who allow us to dream bigger each year, and we look forward to many more collaborations yet to come!

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### ***Inward Pieces***, by Angélica Negrón

There are certain themes in our lives that we're afraid to confront, despite (or perhaps because of) how deeply they have shaped us. *Inward Pieces* is a series of short movements written for Sō Percussion inspired by four such themes in my own life. Each piece focuses on the quartet's interactions with a series of mechanical instruments built by artist and engineer Nick Yulman. Yulman's robotic sound machines (which he calls the Bricolo Mechanical Music System) consist of four solenoid-powered mechanical modules that attach to acoustic instruments or physical objects. Each piece requires the performers to interact with the modular music devices in different ways.

*gone* explores the visceral emptiness in the wake of absence, while searching for connections with and meaning in the people and things that remain. It uses acrylic cubes placed atop Bricolo modules to create fast, erratic, and incisive rhythms with a ghost-like presence; at times interacting with the members of Sō and at others having a mind of its own. *gone* was commissioned by the Brookby Foundation for the 10th Anniversary of SōSI.

*wires* is a robotic chorale about searching for meaning through connection with a higher spiritual power, while reflecting on religious fanaticism. It uses books laid out on robotic modules set to the "Thing Synth" function—which turns physical objects into tunable oscillators—generating different pitches from the books' inherent resonance.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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*release* is inspired by my experience of generalized anxiety disorder, while learning how to cope with what is outside of my control. It uses translucent magnetic tiles (a construction toy system for children) as they are arranged over “Thing Synths,” generating different chords and subtle sound variations. Performers explore these rhythms by placing and lifting the tiles, continually building new physical shapes and structures. *wires* and *release* were commissioned as part of the Andy Siegel Fellowship.

*go back* confronts the great longing for home in the diaspora, while feeling frustrated and stifled whenever I do return to Puerto Rico. It uses cacerolas and calderos (pots and pans) set on top of Nick’s mechanical devices to evoke the domestic sounds of my childhood as well as the sound of resistance. (A form of sonic protest known as “cacerolazo” characterizes many of the protests on the island and in the diaspora.) *go back* was commissioned through the New Music USA Creator Development Fund.

***Fē Fē*** (2023, Work in Progress) by Olivier Tarpaga

*Dusty road to Dolo*

The sound of the Lobi and Djan’s balafon, my grandmother’s guinea fowls climbing the baobab tree, the smell of boiling millet beer, the rooster crowing at 5 am. The melody of this song is inspired by my childhood trips to the small village of Dolo in the West of Burkina Faso with Jeanne, my dear mother.

*Olivier's four in three*

This is my contemporary offering of Koreduga played on modern drums and wood. This complex rhythm derived from the Koreduga rhythm, is my favorite triplet from the Mandingo empire.

***Go Placidly with Haste*** by Jason Treuting

As with my earlier work, *Amid the Noise*, *Go Placidly with Haste* is inspired by *The Desiderata*, Max Ehrman’s secular prayer of the early 1920’s. The first line of the poem, “Go placidly amid the noise and haste,” still resonates in many aspects of my life and it has continued to be a touchstone of my music making.

The work is made up of several smaller movements that can be combined in any way the performers like and played on any instruments the performers choose.

## PROGRAM NOTES

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There are three types of music in this set. The bulk of the movements are ensemble pieces that ask the performers to become a part of the orchestration process. Four movements are written as virtuosic solo movements that can also be played in other forms if the performers wish. These movements bring a different energy, perhaps some haste, to some of the other more placid movements. And the third type of music provides a refrain of sorts that can be sewn throughout the set of music. This piece, titled *Desiderata*, asks the performers to read the poem silently to themselves and organizes the sounds around different highlighted phrases or words.

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**Angélica Negrón** is a Puerto Rican-born composer and multi-instrumentalist. She writes music for voices, orchestras, and film as well as robots, toys, and plants. Angélica is known for playing with the unexpected intersection of classical and electronic music, unusual instruments, and found sounds.

Residencies and commissions include WNYC's *The Greene Space* (a 4-part variety show/multimedia exploration of sound and personal history), the NY Botanical Garden (an immersive site-specific work for electronics and 100 voices), and *Opera Philadelphia* (a drag opera film in collaboration with Mathew Placek and Sasha Velour). Recent commissions include works for the LA Philharmonic, NY Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Sō Percussion, Kronos Quartet, *Roomful of Teeth*, and an original score for the HBO docuseries *Menudo: Forever Young*.

Angélica has upcoming premieres with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra (featuring Lido Pimienta as a soloist), Santa Rosa Symphony & Eugene Symphony (First Symphony project), and The Hermitage Artist Retreat (as the recipient of the 2022 Hermitage Greenfield Prize). Angélica regularly performs a solo show and is a founding member of the tropical electronic band *Balún*. Recent performances include the Big Ears Festival 2022 and various engagements in New York City, San Juan, and nationwide.

Her musical education includes early studies at El Conservatorio de Música de Puerto Rico under Alfonso Fuentes—while making waves as a member of San Juan's local DIY music scene—and later studies both at NYU under Pedro da Silva and The Graduate Center (CUNY) under Tania León. An educator herself, Angélica became a teaching artist with NY Phil's Very Young Composers program (2013-2021) and with Lincoln Center Education (2014-2018), guiding young artists in creative composition projects.

Angélica lives in Brooklyn, where she's always looking for ways to incorporate her love of drag, comedy, and the natural world into her work.

**Olivier Tarpaga** (USA/Burkina Faso), is a Lester Horton Award-winning choreographer/director of the African Music Ensembles of Princeton University. Tarpaga has performed and taught music and dance regularly in more than 50 countries throughout Africa, Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Oceania. Since 1998, Tarpaga has composed and performed contemporary and traditional music and conceived dynamic dance theater works, touring internationally and the US with an impressive roster of collaborators and commissioning partners: including The Hollywood Bowl, the Ford Amphitheater, The New Delhi Sacred Music Festival (India), The World Cultures Festival (Hong Kong), The Bali Spirit Festival (Indonesia), Festival de Jazz d'Amiens (France), Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Harlem Stage, The Joyce Theater, REDCAT, Crossing the Line Festival, Jacob's Pillow, Action Danse Festival (Morocco), Charleroi Dance Biennale (Belgium), Natanda Dance Festival (Sri Lanka), The Drama Center (Singapore), and Session House (Tokyo).

Tarpaga's music and dance works have been described as "unforgettable" by Los Angeles Times and "extraordinary" by The New York Times. Born in Kaya, Burkina Faso, Tarpaga followed in the steps of his father Abdoulaye Richard Tarpaga, co-artistic director of the 1960s Orchestre Super Volta. At the age of sixteen he was selected as an actor, dancer and drummer for Burkina Faso's acclaimed company "Le Bourgeon du Burkina," which performed at numerous festivals and theaters throughout Africa, Europe, and South America. Tarpaga is the founder and artistic director of the internationally acclaimed Dafra Drum (1995–present), which plays traditional Manding music, and Dafra Kura Band (2011–present), which plays contemporary African music. He is also a co-founder of Burkina Faso's internationally acclaimed Compagnie Ta (2000–2004) and Philadelphia-based Baker & Tarpaga Dance Project (2004–present). Tarpaga plays numerous instruments and is an expert in the calabash, djembe, and dundun drums. Over the years, he has developed and taught his own sophisticated drumming solo technique inspired by grand masters Adama Dramé and Amadou Kienou. Between 2004–2017, Tarpaga served as faculty of music or dance at UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures (CA), the University of the Arts (PA), the Ohio State University (OH), Kenyon College (OH), Denison University (OH), and the University of Iowa (IA).

A founding and current member of the influential quartet, Sō Percussion, composer/percussionist **Jason Treuting** has appeared in performance throughout the world, from the Barbican to Lincoln Center, to Carnegie Hall, DOM Moscow, Walt Disney Hall, and elsewhere.

Treuting is also a composer of works that have been performed and collaborated on by musical luminaries including Caroline Shaw, Bryce Dessner, Shara Nova, Sam Amidon, Iarla O'Lionaird, and Steve Mackey (their New Amsterdam album, Orpheus Unsung, has received widespread critical acclaim), among others.

Treuting's composition Amid the Noise has been performed widely by Sō Percussion, Matmos and other artists, at the Lincoln Center Festival, the Barbican, the Walker Arts Center, National Sawdust, and elsewhere. It has been presented by Fast Forward Austin, Kadence Arts Boston, Chatterbird, and others, and was recorded by Sō Percussion for release on Cantaloupe Records. Jason Treuting is co-director of the percussion program at the Bard College Conservatory of Music, and is a lecturer of music at Princeton University, where Sō Percussion is ensemble-in-residence. He lives in Princeton, New Jersey with his partner, the violist Beth Meyers, and their two daughters.

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## **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.

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 Fall 2023, Sō Percussion performs twice at Carnegie Hall (once with the Kronos Quartet for its 50th Anniversary concert and once in a solo show with friends). This Fall also marks Sō’s tenth 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 Sō Laboratories 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, hosted on the Princeton University campus.

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

[www.sopercussion.com](http://www.sopercussion.com)

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## THANK YOU

Thank you to the Department of Music at Princeton University.

Sō Percussion wishes to thank all of their donors. Sō Percussion's 2023-2024 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](http://www.arts.gov)
- The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature
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- 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.



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