

saturday, october 17, 2015

7:30 pm

National Sawdust

Roomful of Teeth

Brad Wells, artistic director

Estelí Gomez, soprano

Martha Cluver, soprano

Caroline Shaw, alto

Virginia Warnken, alto

Eric Dudley, tenor

Thomas McCargar, baritone

Taylor Ward, baritone

Cameron Beauchamp, bass

TED HEARNE.....*Coloring Books*
(World Premiere)

Intermission

MISSY MAZZOLI.....*Vesper Sparrow*

CALEB BURHANS.....*No and Beneath*

ANNA CLYNE.....*Pocket Book VIII*
(World Premiere)

ERIC DUDLEY.....*Suonare / to sound*

WILLIAM BRITTELLE.....*High Done No Why To*

THE PROGRAM

TED HEARNE: *COLORING BOOK*

Composer, singer, and bandleader Ted Hearne draws on a wide breadth of influences ranging across music's full terrain, to create intense, personal and multi-dimensional works. *Law of Mosaics*, Ted's 30-minute piece for string orchestra, will see performances this year by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and San Francisco Symphony, and was named one of The New Yorker's most notable albums of 2014 by Alex Ross. Recent and upcoming works include commissions from the LA Philharmonic, eighth blackbird, A Far Cry, Yarn/Wire and Roomful of Teeth. Ted performs with Philip White as the vocal-electronics duo R WE WHO R WE, belongs to the composer collective Sleeping Giant, and his most recent collaboration paired him with legendary musician Erykah Badu. Two forthcoming albums of vocal music, *The Source* and *Outlanders*, will see release on New Amsterdam Records in 2015.

Ted is the recipient of the Gaudeamus Prize in composition and the New Voices Residency from Boosey and Hawkes. He recently joined the composition faculty at the University of Southern California.

IN THE COMPOSER'S OWN WORDS

"They will never, so long as their whiteness puts so sinister a distance between themselves and their own experience and the experience of others, feel themselves sufficiently human, sufficiently worthwhile, to become responsible for themselves, their leaders, their country, their children, or their fate."

- James Baldwin, "An Open Letter to My Sister, Angela Y. Davis" (1970)

Coloring Book is a set of songs for Roomful of Teeth. Each movement is an appropriation and musical setting of texts by Black Americans writing about their blackness. I tried to imagine what their words might mean if they were instead spoken by me, in my voice, about my whiteness. I did this not to pretend the authors' intended meanings could ever be erased from these words, but rather to see myself through them, thereby layering another meaning on top.

1. The game of keeping

[The position of my white neighbor is much more difficult.]

No brown specter pulls up a chair beside me when I sit down to eat.

No dark ghost thrusts its leg against mine in bed.

[The game of keeping what one has is never so exciting as the game of getting.]

Zora Neale Hurston
from "How it feels to be colored me" (1928)

2. You are not the guy

And you are not the guy and still you fit the description because there is only one guy who is always the guy fitting the description.

Each time it begins in the same way, it doesn't begin the same way, each time it begins it's the same. Flashes, a siren, the stretched-out roar—

And you are not the guy and still you fit the description

—roar—

still you fit the description because there is only one guy who is always the guy fitting the description.

This is what it looks like. You know this is wrong. This is not what it looks like. You need to be quiet. This is wrong. You need to close your mouth now. This is what it looks like. You can't drive yourself sane. You are not the guy.

And you are not the guy and still you fit the description because there is only one guy who is always the guy fitting the description. Get on the ground now. Then I just knew.

Yes officer rolled around on my tongue, which grew out of a bell that could never ring because its emergency was a tolling I was meant to swallow.

Claudia Rankine from *Citizen* (2014)

3. What feels

What feels more than feeling?

You are afraid there is something you are missing, something obvious.

A feeling that feelings might be irrelevant if they point to one's irrelevance pulls at you.

What feels more than feeling?

Claudia Rankine from *Citizen* (2014)

4. Letter to my father

Him. He

He has only heard what I

I felt. He

He is far away but I

I see him.

Him but dimly across the ocean and the continent that have fallen between us.

Us. He

He is so pale with his whiteness then and I

I am so colored.

Music. The great blobs of purple and red emotion have not touched him.

He is so pale with his whiteness then and I

I am so colored.

Zora Neale Hurston
from "How it feels to be colored me" (1928)

5. Your people

Your self and your people are indistinguishable from each other,
really, in spite of the quarrels you may have,
and your people are all people.

James Baldwin
from an interview with James Elgrably
in *The Paris Review* (1984)

MISSY MAZZOLI: *vesper sparrow*

Missy Mazzoli was recently deemed “one of the more consistently inventive, surprising composers now working in New York” (*The New York Times*), “Brooklyn’s post-millennial Mozart” (*Time Out New York*) and “one of the new wave of scarily smart young composers” (*sequenza21.com*). Her music has been performed all over the world by the Kronos Quartet, eighth blackbird, pianist Emanuel Ax, the Detroit Symphony, the LA Philharmonic, the Minnesota Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, JACK Quartet, Opera Philadelphia, New York City Opera, cellist Maya Beiser, violinist Jennifer Koh, pianist Kathleen Supové, Dublin’s Crash Ensemble, the Sydney Symphony and many others. She is currently Composer-in-Residence with Opera Philadelphia, Gotham Chamber Opera and Music Theatre-Group. Missy was a visiting professor of music at New York University in 2013, and recently joined the composition faculty at the Mannes College of Music, a division of the New School.

IN THE COMPOSER’S OWN WORDS

Vesper Sparrow was written for Roomful of Teeth at their 2012 residency at Mass MoCA. The text comes from Farnoosh Fathi’s poem Home State, from her recent book Great Guns. The piece is an eclectic amalgamation of imaginary birdsong and my own interpretation of Sardinian overtone singing. In this piece I tried to capture the exuberance and energy of these individual singers as well as a bit of the magic that is created when this group comes together.

What will come so soon

To my golden door

When asleep from all sides

Asleep in the glass pajamas of man

Text by Farnoosh Fathi, from the book *Great Guns*
(modified for Roomful of Teeth in August 2012)

CALEB BURHANS: *BENEATH*

Caleb Burhans is an established, multifaceted presence in the New York contemporary music scene who is active as both a performer (strings, voice) and composer. Hailed by *The New York Times* as, “animated and versatile,” and, “New York’s mohawked Mozart” by *Time Out New York*, Mr. Burhans specializes in baroque performance practice, contemporary music, rock/pop music, electronica and free improv. He has been commissioned by Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Library of Congress and the Albany and Alabama symphony orchestras. In 2009 Caleb was awarded the prestigious Annenberg Fellowship.

You can hear Caleb’s music around the world at events like the Bang on a Can Marathon, Look and Listen Festival, Tribeca New Music Festival, Darmstadt Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Open Days Festival (Denmark) and the Aspen Music Festival.

Burhans is a founding member of Alarm Will Sound, itsnotyouitsme, Signal and the Wordless Music Orchestra and he is also a member of ACME, Newspeak and the disco band Escort. He has worked with and premiered numerous works by such composers as Philip Glass, Steve Reich, John Adams, La Monte Young, Lou Harrison, Meredith Monk, David Lang, John Zorn, George Crumb and Brian Ferneyhough. Caleb attended the Eastman School of Music where he received degrees in composition and viola performance.

IN THE COMPOSER’S OWN WORDS

In my piece *Beneath*, I was looking to explore the full vocal range of Roomful of Teeth, which spans over four octaves. The title is drawn from an episode of the television show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* entitled “From Beneath You, It Devours.”

ANNA CLYNE: *POCKET BOOK VIII*

Anna Clyne is a Grammy-nominated composer of acoustic and electro-acoustic music, combining resonant soundscapes with propelling textures that weave, morph, and collide in dramatic explosions. Her work, described as “dazzlingly inventive” by *Time Out New York*, often includes collaborations with cutting-edge choreographers, visual artists, filmmakers, and musicians worldwide. Clyne is an alumna of ACO’s annual new music readings for emerging composers. Her piece *Tender Hooks*, for orchestra, electronics and computer-generated graphics, was commissioned by ACO as part of its inaugural Playing It UNSafe R&D lab for experimental new music. Highlights for the 15-16 season include a new work for 100 cellos, commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, to be premiered at the Hollywood Bowl; *This Lunar Beauty* for the Britten Sinfonia with soprano Anna Dennis; a U.S. premiere by the Seattle Symphony; and a new orchestral ballet for the Cabrillo Festival with conductor Marin Alsop. Appointed by Music Director Riccardo Muti, Clyne served as a Mead Composer-in-Residence for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 2010-2015, and is currently Composer-in-Residence for the Orchestre National d’Île de France.

Music to hear, why hear’st thou music sadly?

Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy:

Why lov’st thou that which thou receiv’st not gladly,

Or else receiv’st with pleasure thine annoy?

If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,

By unions married, do offend thine ear,

They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds

In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,

Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;

Resembling sire and child and happy mother,

Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:

Whose speechless song being many, seeming one,

Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none.'

William Shakespeare, Sonnet 8

ERIC DUDLEY: *SUONARE/TO SOUND*

Eric Dudley leads a diverse musical career as a conductor, singer, pianist and composer. Recent conducting roles include New York's International Contemporary Ensemble, Adelphi Chamber Orchestra, TENET Ensemble, and the Melbourne International Arts Festival in Australia. He is a member of the choir of Trinity Wall Street, and has been chorusmaster and guest conductor for several concerts. He performs with Ekmeles, Signal Ensemble, Musica Sacra, The New York Virtuoso Singers, Collegiate Chorale. Past solo engagements include performances with American Symphony Orchestra and Trinity Baroque Orchestra at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. A pianist and chamber musician, he has performed with Novus New York and the Cincinnati, Princeton, and Albany Symphony orchestras. His music has been premiered by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Quey Percussion Duo, and Roomful of Teeth, of which he is a founding member.

He holds a BM in composition from the Eastman School of Music and is a recipient of Master's and Doctoral degrees from Yale. Eric is on the faculty of Mannes College/The New School for Music, directing the Mannes Prep Philharmonic and The New School Chorus.

IN THE COMPOSER'S OWN WORDS

From a larger set of pieces called *wordplay*, *suonare/to sound* is a meditation on qualities of timbre and language. I was fascinated with the idea of writing complementary poems—each a direct translation of the other—that have interesting sonic properties of their own and which are amplified when superimposed. In this case in English and Italian, a reflection on the nature of sound and its various guises in our everyday lives yields rich internal assonance and vowel harmony in both languages. My image for the musical setting was that of a cavernous, echoing space, with each of the voice parts moving as if in delayed reaction to the others. Slowly shifting harmonies in the lower voices trace a path through the English text, while the two soprano voices skim across the surface in Italian pirouettes, one an echo of the other. Roomful of Teeth gave the piece its premiere during our summer residency at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in 2010.

Text:

Sounds sound near and sound far	Suoni suonano vicino e lontano
Sound deafens and sound whispers	Suono assorda e suono soffia
Sounds sound in sleep and in dreams	Suoni suonano in sonno e in sogni
Sound sounds always	Suono suona sempre

WILLIAM BRITTELLE: *HIGH DONE NO WHY TO*

William Brittelle is a Brooklyn-based composer of post-genre electro-acoustic music. His most recent album *Loving the Chambered Nautilus*, is a series of electro-acoustic chamber music pieces melding classic synthesizer sounds and drum programming and classical composition. Previously, William released *Television Landscape*, his fully-composed, post-

apocalyptic art rock concept album scored for orchestra, rock band, synths, and children's choir. His compositions have been presented at Festival Internacional, Pittsburgh's Music on the Edge series, Seattle's Town Hall, the Switchboard Festival in San Francisco, (le) Poisson Rouge, Joe's Pub at the Public Theater, The Stone, and the Ecstatic Music Festival. His music has been commissioned by the Seattle Symphony, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Alabama Symphony, Roomful of Teeth and the Williams College Chorus.

William received grants and awards from the National Endowment of the Arts, American Music Center, American Composers Forum, the Jerome Foundation, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and ASCAP. He co-artistic directs New Amsterdam Records and New Amsterdam Presents. He is currently on the faculty of The New School School in New York City, teaching courses in Post-Genre Music and the Ethos of Punk.

IN THE COMPOSER'S OWN WORDS

High Done No Why To was written while in residency with Roomful of Teeth and represents my initial attempt to synthesize their many amazing extended vocal techniques into a single coherent piece. I decided to use words as "sound" instead of "lyrics" in order to stay focused on texture and harmony (rather than getting caught up in an external narrative). The ending of the piece was written from midnight to 6am on the eve of our final rehearsal of the residency and is meant to bring a sense of catharsis to the end of a somewhat restless and angular piece.

THE ARTISTS

ROOMFUL OF TEETH

Roomful of Teeth is a GRAMMY-winning vocal project dedicated to mining the expressive potential of the human voice. Through study with masters from singing traditions the world over, the eight-voice ensemble continually expands its vocabulary of singing techniques and, through an ongoing commissioning process, forges a new repertoire without borders. Their pair of albums have garnered a great deal of attention in the world of classical, chamber, and new music.

Founded in 2009 by Brad Wells, the band gathers annually at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) in North Adams, Massachusetts, where they've studied Tuvan throat singing, yodeling, belting, Inuit throat singing, Korean P'ansori, Georgian singing, Sardinian *cantu a tenore*, Hindustani music and Persian classical singing with some of the world's top performers and teachers. Commissioned composers include Rinde Eckert, Judd Greenstein, Caleb Burhans, Merrill Garbus, William Brittelle, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Missy Mazzoli, Michael Harrison, Sam Amidon and Ted Hearne.

Upcoming projects in 2015-2016 include *The Colorado*, a music driven documentary film that explores water, land and survival in the Colorado River Basin (featuring former Kronos Quartet cellist Jeffrey Zeigler and Wilco's Glenn Kotche); concerts with the Seattle Symphony performing Berio's *Sinfonia*; collaborations with NOW Ensemble and the American Contemporary Music Ensemble (ACME); appearances at new music festivals in the US, Mexico, Vancouver, South Korea and Turkey; and partnerships with over a dozen higher education institutions across the country.

BRAD WELLS

Conductor, singer, composer and Roomful of Teeth Founder/Artistic Director, Brad Wells, directs the choral program, oversees and teaches studio voice, and leads courses in conducting, arranging and voice science and style at Williams College in Williamstown, MA.

Brad has held conducting positions at Yale University, Trinity College, University of California at Berkeley and California State University, Chico, and has directed choirs of all ages. His ensembles have performed throughout North and South America, South Africa and Europe. In 2007, Brad commissioned and led the Williams Concert Choir in the world premiere in Palestrina, Italy, of Judd Greenstein's *Lamenting*, a work based on Renaissance composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's settings of Hebrew letters from his Lamentations. In 2006, he assisted with the world premiere of Philip Miller's *REwind: A Cantata for tape, testimony and voice* in Cape Town, South Africa, and conducted the U.S. premiere at the Celebrate Brooklyn Festival in New York City.

A champion of Estonian choral music, Brad has led the U.S. premieres of works by numerous Estonian composers including Raimo Kangro, Jüri-Ruut Kangur, and Lembit Veevo. He has lectured and published articles on the physiology and acoustics of non-classical vocal styles and the role of singing in film. As a singer, he has performed and recorded with such ensembles as Paul Hillier's Theatre of Voices, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra (under Nicholas McGegan and Philip Brett) and the California Choral Company (under William Dehning). In 1998, he was the recipient of the Aidan Kavanagh Achievement Prize from the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. Brad received the Doctor of Musical Arts (2005), Yale University; Master of Musical Arts (1998), Yale University; Master of Music (1986), University of Texas at Austin; B.A. (1984), Principia College.