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Photo: Roger Jones

“Roisterous, engaging, audacious,” – *San Francisco Chronicle*

“A fantastically distorted perpetual motion of awesome.” – *I Care If You Listen*

“A vanguard effort of new chamber music.” – *The San Francisco Examiner*

“In live performances, the musical communication between Meyerson and Andrews is at times astonishing and has the feeling of being completely natural.” – *NewMusicBox*

In 2019/20, the ferociously creative percussion-guitar duo **The Living Earth Show** (Travis Andrews and Andy Meyerson) celebrates its tenth anniversary with a slate of projects and original collaborations, each radically different but distinctly shaped by The Living Earth Show’s fierce and virtuosic voice. Built on repertoire that springs from The Living Earth Show’s mission to commission, collaborate, and amplify vital creators from a truly diverse range of communities – including crucial artists from communities that are often marginalized and overlooked by the traditional US arts institutions – the season offers audiences in San Francisco and the US an opportunity to hear work that challenges, engages, and inspires.

Original productions in The Living Earth Show’s anniversary season include Raven Chacon’s *Tremble Staves* (Oct 19, 2019), a site-specific exploration of the water crisis facing down the Western United States and Navajo Nation (and elsewhere in the world), presented on the Pacific Ocean shore at the ruins of San Francisco’s Sutro Baths; *Humble Servant* (season opener, September 21, 2019), a solo percussion recital exploring tension, resonance, ritual, and control in virtuosic works written for percussionist and TLES Artistic Director Andy Meyerson

by Samuel Adams, Christopher Cerrone, Adrian Knight, Amadeus Regucera, and Sarah Hennies; *Hyphen* (Jan 22-28, 2020), an 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of the ground-breaking Iranian composer Alireza Mashayekhi curated by Farnood HaghaniPour and featuring a world premiere by Mashayekhi alongside new electroacoustical works by generations of Iranian and Iranian-American composers influenced by his work; and *Lyra*, an ambitious and breathtaking balletic re-telling of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth by composer Samuel Adams (who wrote the first-ever TLES commission) performed with San Francisco dance company Post:Ballet.

There are also happy returns to "classic" The Living Earth Show productions, including *COMMANDO*, the fabulously aggressive celebration of queerness created in collaboration with a San Francisco-based collective of queer and trans artists including Lynne Breedlove, Juba Kalamka, Honey Mahogany, Drew Arriola-Sands, and Krylon Superstar (Nov 7, 2019 in SF, and Nov 9 at Transgress Fest LA); and, at the first-annual **T.L.E.S.tival** (co-produced by ODC Theater in San Francisco, March 2020) two of The Living Earth Show's most distinctive, iconic collaborations: the inimitable M. Lamar's *Lordship & Bondage: The Birth of the Negro Superman*, and the soul-searching San Francisco spoken-word opera, *Echoes*, composed by Danny Clay and created and performed by TLES with the Kronos Quartet and Youth Speaks.

Bursting with collaborative energy and joyful agency, reverberating with the distinctive spirit of San Francisco, this season offers a compelling portrait of The Living Earth Show entering its second decade: an ensemble that unifies diverse creations with a full-bodied commitment to the radical visions of collaborators, creating and performing with love and incomparable skill, inviting audiences to stay, listen, and engage.

As composer/artist Raven Chacon says, "*The Living Earth Show can play any music I write for them. They are brilliant collaborators at all levels of conceptualization.*"

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THE LIVING EARTH SHOW  
IN 2019/2020;  
A TENTH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

September 21, 2019

*Humble Servant*

Z Below, San Francisco, CA

Works Samuel Adams, Christopher Cerrone, Sarah Hennies,  
Adrian Knight, and Amadeus Regucera

The Living Earth Show's Andy Meyerson offers an idiosyncratic recital of solo percussion recital of works exploring tension, resonance, ritual, and control, seeking out and deftly exploring the limits of what a percussionist, a performer, and the human body is capable. The result is an evening that is personal, emotional, and surprising. Repertoire includes a world premiere from long-time TLES collaborator Samuel Adams, and new/recent works written for Meyerson by Adrian Knight, Sarah Hennies, Christopher Cerrone, and Amadeus Regucera.

October 19, 2019

## ***Tremble Staves***

(world premiere)

Sutro Baths, San Francisco, CA

Composed and staged by Raven Chacon

Co-produced with the Golden Gates National Parks Conservancy and Art in the Parks

(Work-in-progress showing: October 6, Chamber Music Day, San Francisco)

A ravishing and challenging site-specific work, Raven Chacon's *Tremble Staves* connects narratives of the San Francisco Bay Area's complicated relationship with water – usage, access, rights – to overlapping Navajo creation stories in which water figures prominently. The work will be performed from memory by The Living Earth Show, utilizing many versions of water – which is present throughout the performance site of Sutro Baths – as a dynamic percussion instrument.

This production is specifically tailored for the setting of Sutro Baths, a late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century outdoor pool complex whose concrete ruins are now a part of the Golden Gates National Recreation Area. *Tremble Staves* is produced in partnership with the Parks Conservancy and the Golden Gate National Recreation area through the Tunes on Trails program.

The audience joins the performers in the environment, and the effect is immersion; the opera immerses the audience in a body of resonance; communally engaging in the work, considering the possibilities, while also confronting their complicity in the water's depletion.

Raven Chacon explains: *"On the surface, Tremble Staves is about water; the scarcity of it, especially in the desert where I am from, and of course its sacredness; we are water. But an artwork or music composition should not be what ultimately brings awareness to anyone at this point about the crisis we are facing. Perhaps we are doomed.*

*The piece is also about the interactions and relationships that animals (people included) might have with each other, or with the land, or with nature, or with something else that we can't comprehend, even at our most spiritual and vulnerable. Tremble Staves*

*considers different moving and stationary bodies of water (tributaries, channels, sounds) as examples of these interactions; in how knowledge may be transferred, negotiated, shared, dispersed and even diluted.*

*We wanted to bring this piece to the public, a site of water, of meditation. Of course anytime there is an opportunity to look at the ocean or the sky, one can attempt to peer toward infinity. We can be loud, and be seen from afar.”*

November 7, 2019 in San Francisco\*

November 9, 2019, Los Angeles, Transgress Fest

## ***COMMANDO***

Music by Lynn Breedlove, Juba Kalamka, Honey Mahogany, Drew Arriola-Sands, Krylon Superstar, and The Living Earth Show

First launched in 2016, COMMANDO is a vital example of The Living Earth Show’s commitment to making music in ways that countervail and upend traditional groupings and genres – and at this point, COMMANDO is essentially a distinct supergroup. Featuring a collective of San Francisco-based queer and trans artists, COMMANDO uses the traditionally heteronormative vocabulary of heavy metal and rap together with sharply urban poetry to offer a full-throated celebration of queerness.

This season marks the release of an album of the collective’s work, which will be complemented by a national tour of the project (dates and cities to be announced), and the November 9 performance at Transgress Fest (which was co-founded and is led by COMMANDO member Drew Arriola-Sands) represents a homecoming for the ensemble to Southern California’s first punk and hardcore festival that centers the music and voices of trans/gender non-conforming bands.

\*The November 7 San Francisco performance is to be confirmed.

January 22, 2020 Center for New Music San Francisco

Jan 25 UC Irvine

Jan 26 Cal Poly Pomona

Jan 28 UC Riverside

## ***Hyphen***

Music by Alireza Mashayekhi, Aida Shirazi, Sina Sedghi,  
Nima Rowshan, and Farnood HaghaniPour

Curated by Farnood HaghaniPour, *Hyphen* showcases new works written for The Living Earth Show by composers representing different generations of Iranian electroacoustic music. The program offers a personal celebration of the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of the ground-breaking Iranian composer Alireza Mashayekhi curated by Farnood HaghaniPour and featuring a world premiere by Mashayekhi – *Labyrinth II* – alongside new works by generations of Iranian and Iranian-American composers deeply influenced by Alireza Mashayekhi, including Aida Shirazi, Sina Sedghi, Nima Rowshan, and Farnood himself. *Hyphen* ponders the history and impact of cultural intersection on music of the Iranian community.

March 6 and 7, 2020

### T.L.E.S.tival

The Living Earth Show celebrates its tenth birthday with the launch of an annual festival. The inaugural T.L.E.S.tival offers two of The Living Earth Show's most iconic collaborative productions, presented at San Francisco's ODC Theater:

March 6, 2020

### ***Lordship and Bondage: The Birth of the Negro Superman***

Composed by M. Lamar with The Living Earth Show

***Lordship and Bondage: The Birth of the Negro Superman*** is an original ten-movement song cycle featuring texts drawn from G.W.F. Hegel's "Lordship and Bondage" from *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, Friedrich Nietzsche's "Übermensch" from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and Sun Ra's interviews and writings on discipline and freedom.

Expressing and enacting a becoming of Black mind, body, and soul, *Lordship and Bondage: The Birth of the Negro Superman* continues M. Lamar's personal quest for a new existential philosophy partaking of what Fred Moten calls "the black Radical tradition," offering experiences of enslaved and liberated consciousness, and decisively rejecting (and reaching beyond) Christianity and white supremacist liberal capitalism.

Commissioned and co-composed by The Living Earth Show, *Lordship and Bondage: The Birth of the Negro Superman* draws inspiration from Doom Spirituals (a sub-genre among Negro spirituals, identified by Lamar); classical opera, and the underground aesthetics of Goth and Metal subcultures (including Transcendental Black Metal).

Andy Meyerson explains the commissioning and collaborative creation of *Lordship & Bondage*: "Though *Lordship & Bondage* is firmly rooted in the classical tradition, there is no notated score--the music was composed jointly by M. Lamar, Travis and myself, responding to M. Lamar's text using a foundation of structured improvisation. This is some of the more impressionistic music we have performed; M. Lamar's idea for the work is to represent and evoke black transcendence. We are honored to work with M. Lamar, and aim to provide the tools necessary to realize his vision for this project."

M. Lamar says: “*So much of the imagery for Lordship and Bondage: The Birth Of The Negro Superman evokes for me a religious and spiritual ecstasy. This production and this album are deeply guided by Cornel West’s ideas of Transfiguration relative music as well as Sun Ra’s idea of spirit sound.*”

*Lordship & Bondage: The Birth of the Negro Superman* was released as a digital album on February 15, 2019 through M. Lamar’s personal label, Negrothotic, the same month the production was presented by MetLiveArts in a sold-out performance at The Cloisters in New York City.

March 7, 2020

## *Echoes*

Composed by Danny Clay, featuring Kronos Quartet and Youth Speaks

*Echoes*, a spoken word chamber opera, is a meditation on, interrogation of, and ode to San Francisco: the magical, troubling, and overwhelmingly complicated place all these artists call home. Composer Danny Clay, whose music is deeply rooted in curiosity and collaboration, worked closely with the artists and students to develop a piece that integrates elements of poetry, sound, and theater.

The Living Earth Show is honored to join forces with two of San Francisco’s most influential arts organizations to bring this work to vivid life. Kronos Quartet has spent four and a half decades redefining what a string quartet can be by responding to the world we share and expanding the understanding of music’s role as a powerful force in society.

Youth Speaks, a force for good in San Francisco’s cultural life since its inception, represents an almost impossibly influential and impactful synthesis of artistic creation, education, and activism for otherwise underserved urban youth.

Youth Speaks’ Ashely Smilely offers: “*Echoes is a piece that sits deep within my heart not only because I was born and raised in San Francisco, but because it was also such a tremendous challenge to expand my artistry. Being able to share my heartbreak over the city that I love and its rapid dissolve through Echoes also allows me to have an honest conversation with audience members, whether they are from the City or not, about the City I knew and the City I see now and how it truly makes me feel on every level. I hope that Echoes provides inspiration for not only for San Francisco natives (especially those of color) but other communities in other cities that are experiencing the same things and maybe even inspire them to create an Echoes of their own.*”

“*An emotionally impactful, timely, and original performance,*” wrote Nastia Voynovskaya for KQED Arts about the 2017 premiere presented by SF Performances. “*Echoes did the important*

*work of fostering a conversation across racial and class lines -- one that rarely happens in an increasingly segregated Bay Area."*

## ***Lyra***

World premiere, composed by Samuel Adams and featuring Post:Ballet  
Work-in-progress showings throughout 19/20 include  
Post:Workshop, August 2, 2019, Dance Mission Theater  
P:B Jam September 26, 2019, SOMArts Cultural Center  
Living Earth Day April, 2020, SOMArts Cultural Center

A new multimedia dance, musical, visual and culinary art production, ***Lyra*** is the creation of acclaimed composer Samuel Adams (who won the 2019 Guggenheim award specifically to support this project, and who wrote The Living Earth Show's first-ever commission in 2010), choreographer Vanessa Thiessen, director Robert Dekkers, and The Living Earth Show. ***Lyra*** uses the touchstone story of Orpheus and Eurydice as the foundation for an exploration of the human condition in the modern era, and represents rising star Samuel Adams's most ambitious work to date.

Adams explains, *"Andy and Travis have a proven track record as some of today's most virtuosic and intrepid artists. They are two of my closest and longest-standing collaborators, and it's a joy to be building our newest work together. Lyra aims tremendously high, and I'm thrilled to be part of the creative team."*

The creative material for ***Lyra*** will be built throughout 2019 with work-in-progress showings at Post:Workshop August 2, 2019 at Dance Mission Theater, P:B Jam September 26, 2019 at SOMArts Cultural Center, and on Earth Day, April 22, 2020 at SOMArts Cultural Center. The finished production will be given its world premiere performance in July 2020.

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Called "outstanding" by the San Francisco Chronicle, "transcendent" by the Charleston City Paper, and "a fully distorted perpetual motion of awesome" by I Care If You Listen, **The Living Earth Show** (guitarist **Travis Andrews** and percussionist **Andy Meyerson**) is a megaphone and canvas for some of the world's most progressive artists. One of the premiere contemporary chamber arts ensembles in the United States, The Living Earth Show received the grand prize in the SAVVY Chamber Arts Competition and runner-up in the open division of the M-Prize Chamber Arts Competition, has commissioned and premiered over 60 new works by some of the most vital composers in the world, and released two critically acclaimed albums, and has performed, lectured, and given masterclasses across the country.

Memorizing every work it performs, The Living Earth Show thrives on pushing the boundaries of technical and artistic possibility in its presentation of commissioned electro-acoustic chamber music. It has presented seasons

of commissioned multimedia productions since 2011, working with dance companies, visual artists, sculptors, poets, and other musicians to craft compelling, immersive, San Francisco-centric work. The ensemble has commissioned and premiered works by such composers as Anna Meredith, Timo Andres, Nicole Lizée, M. Lamar, Raven Chacon, Christopher Cerrone, Alireza Mashayekhi, Jacob Cooper, Brian Ferneyhough, Samuel Adams, Ken Ueno, Luciano Chessa, Danny Clay, Sharmi Basu, Ted Hearne, Sarah Hennies, Morgan Craft, Adrian Knight, Ava Mendoza, Alden Jenks, and Zachary James Watkins. Many of these commissions can be found on the group's critically acclaimed albums *High Art* (Innova Records, 2013) and *Dance Music* (New Amsterdam Records, 2016). Their recording of M. Lamar's *Lordship & Bondage: The Birth of the Negro Superman* was released on Negrothotic in February 2019, and the *COMMANDO* album will be released in the 19/20 season.

For more information, visit:

[thelivingearthshow.com](http://thelivingearthshow.com)

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