



# NACUSA CONCERT

## A WHIRL OF SOUND

By NACUSA SF Composers  
Broadcast from the Center for New Music  
55 Taylor Street, San Francisco  
Saturday, February 12, 2022, 8:00 pm

### P R O G R A M

ALLAN CROSSMAN	<b>Schumanniana</b> <i>Allan Crossman, piano</i>
AMY STEPHENS	<b>A Day at the Beach</b> <i>Amy Stephens, piano</i>
MARY FINEMAN	<b>And the World Spins 'Round, 'Round</b> <i>Mary Fineman, piano</i>
JOHN BILOTTA	<b>Tres Canciones Y Danzas</b> <i>Jeff O'Sammon, guitar</i>
GREG A STEINKE	<b>A Vortex of Urgent Winds</b> <i>Lyle Sheffler, guitar</i>
STEVE MOBIA	<b>Stem Business</b> <i>Lyle Sheffler, guitar, Sharon Wayne, guitar</i>
NANCIE KESTER	<b>Desert Moonlight</b> <i>Jessie Nucho, flute, Lyle Sheffler and Sharon Wayne, guitar</i>
DAVIDE VEROTTA	<b>Anittam id Ossor</b> <i>Jessie Nucho, flute, Lyle Sheffler, guitar</i>
JOHN BEEMAN	<b>Adagio and Dance</b> <i>Jessie Nucho, flute, Lyle Sheffler, guitar</i>

SHELI NAN

**Journey - The Song Cycle**

The Canoe

The River

The Path

*Sheli Nan, piano, Ryan Bradford Baritone*

BRIAN HOLMES

**Three Songs**

Thermodynamics

Particle Physics

The Jolly Hunter

*Kyle Sofman, soprano, Margaret Fondbertasse, piano, Brian Holmes, Horn*

## The Players

**Jeff O'Sammon** is a Bay Area musician who studied at Music and Arts Institute in San Francisco. He composes, arranges and plays many styles of music. He is fluent in guitar and is a fan of Heitor Villa-Lobos and is currently delving into a more classical realm. Recent performances for Jeff include *Concierto de Aranjuez* (with orchestra) by Joaquin Rodrigo, *Guitar Concerto* for solo guitar and small orchestra by Heitor Villa-Lobos, and selections from Claude Bolling's "Picnic Suite".

**Jessie Nucho**. San Francisco-based flutist Jessie Nucho is passionate about sharing both traditional and contemporary music as a chamber musician, soloist, and educator. She performs regularly with the new music ensembles [After Everything](#) and [Ninth Planet](#), where she also serves as Co-Artistic Director. She is a founding member of Siroko Duo, a flute duo dedicated to commissioning and presenting new works in creative spaces. As a soloist, Jessie has performed at San Francisco's Center for New Music, the Berkeley Arts Festival, the Hot Air Music Festival, and the Legion of Honor. Jessie holds an MM from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where she studied with Tim Day. Previous instructors include Alberto Almarza and Jeanne Baxtresser at Carnegie Mellon University.

**Lyle Sheffler** is quickly becoming a rising star in the classical guitar scene. As a graduate of both the prestigious Peabody Conservatory and San Francisco Conservatory, he is highly praised by audiences and fellow classical guitarists alike. Acclaimed for his artistry and creative interpretations, Lyle has a sound that is remarkably personal and uniquely his.

Classical Guitarist **Sharon Wayne** has been an active performer, teacher, and recording artist, working for over 30 years in the Bay Area and New England. She has concertized throughout the U.S. and abroad as a soloist and chamber musician with a penchant for playing new music. As a founding member of the San Francisco Guitar Quartet, she helped generate new repertoire for guitar, commissioning works by Carlo Domeniconi, Eitan Steinberg, and others. Her recordings include, among others, *In the Midst of Winds* (M.A. Recordings, Tokyo) with composer/guitarist Dušan Bogdanović; *Black Opals* (SFGQ2001) with the San Francisco Guitar Quartet; and her solo CD *From the Heart* (Joplin and Sweeney), which features works by living composers.

Young American baritone **Ryan Bradford**, is quickly creating a name for himself with his "warm, and sumptuous baritone." A DePaul University alumnus (BM in Voice Performance and BA in Italian), he received a master of music degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in 2013. During the 2018/2019 season made a return to the Oakland Symphony, San Rafael Symphony, Rapides Symphony, and Livermore Valley Opera as well as joined Chamber Music Silicon Valley as a vocal fellow. During the 2015-2016 season Ryan was a Mosher Studio Artist with Opera Santa Barbara. In the summer of 2016, he premiered the role of Michael in the world premiere opera *Ours* (Estacio, Chafe) with Opera on the Avalon. During the 2014-2015 season Ryan completed a residency with Shreveport Opera where he sang The Baron in *La Traviata*, Samuel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, as well as Dandini in *La Cenerentola*. This season finds him debuting the world premier chamber opera, *A Song by Mahler* with Chamber Music Society Lincoln Center and Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival.

Praised for her innate ability to connect with a group or soloist, **Margaret Fondbertasse** is a much sought after accompanist. In addition to her position as Peninsula Women's Chorus accompanist, she serves on the faculty at Skyline College where she accompanies the Concert Choir, musical theater productions, voice and instrumental classes. Margaret is devoted to the art of accompanying, chamber music, and teaching. Known as *Katzenduo*, she and mezzo-soprano, Meghan Dibble, frequently perform around the Bay Area. Margaret holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Berkeley and continued her postgraduate studies at the Royal College of Music in Manchester, UK. She is the recipient of the prestigious Eisner Prize and Hertz Fellowship.

When Margaret is not playing the piano, she can be found in her garden constantly defending her variegated plants against pesky weeds.

**Kyle Sofman** is the Program Director at Music in the Schools Foundation where she manages a music program for underserved communities. Kyle has also taught music in the Bay Area for over twenty years. Outside of her work in music education, Kyle has performed with the Peninsula Women's Chorus where she was the section leader, managed volunteers, and served on the Board of Directors. She performs in recitals and appears as a soloist with area choirs. Kyle received a Bachelor's of Music Education at Oberlin College Conservatory and a Masters in Music Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In 2015, she received her Certificate in Nonprofit Management from San Francisco State. Kyle has a penchant for all things purple. When purchasing an item, her first question is usually, "Does it come in purple?" She also enjoys growing sunflowers on her deck, dreaming of Italy, and spending time with friends and family.

## The Composers

**Allan Crossman.** I've had the great pleasure of writing for many soloists and ensembles. *Millennium Overture Dance* is on the eponymous GRAMMY-nominated album from North/South Consonance; *Sonata fLux*, with pianist Keisuke Nakagoshi, appears on Navona Records; *Icarus Rising*, for chamber ensembles/orchestra, came out recently on Centaur Records. The musical, *The Log of the Skipper's Wife*, was produced by the Royal Shakespeare Co. at Stratford and the Kennedy Center, with my score drawn from Irish/Scottish shanties. Teaching has included Concordia University (Montreal), SF Conservatory, Wheaton College (MA), and the Crowden Community Program. [www.acrossman.com](http://www.acrossman.com)

*SCHUMANNIANA*, for piano solo (1982), draws its themes mostly from *Kreisleriana*, movements 1, 5, 7 (1 is the famous "Soaring" – the first theme of my piece); *Fantastic Pieces, Op 12*, "Evening"; and one of the untitled movements from *Album for the Young*. Even just those few sources can touch upon the inexhaustible range of Schumann's drama, expression, color... and figuration: rhythmic textures are the lifeblood of his work, whether for piano, chamber, orchestra. Organizing these themes and their variations was certainly the main task in writing this piece. The question of how Schumann's music may have sounded if he had lived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is of course useless and provocative at the same time. But I must confess that it made itself known throughout the composition of *Schumanniana*.

Pianist **Amy Stephens**, CAPMT's Commissioned Composer 2021, enjoys writing in Third Stream style, a genre of jazz that fuses classical form with jazz language, such as can be heard in Amy's *Scenes of San Francisco*, *A Day at the Beach*, and *Becoming: Suite for Solo Piano*. Amy has fronted her quartet, the Amy Stephens Group (ASG), since 1998. The quartet albums of Amy's many jazz compositions—*My Many Moods*, *Gold Through Fire*, & *Amy Stephens Group*—have earned acclaim and steady airplay on jazz radio around the world. ASG enjoys performing at jazz festivals and concert series. Amy earned two Bachelors, a Masters, and Performer's Certificate in classical & jazz piano from Indiana University School of Music. Teaching privately since 1993, Amy is a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music. For scores, recordings and videos, visit [www.amystephens.com](http://www.amystephens.com).

Northern Coastal California has fascinating sights! We like to explore up and down Highway 1. At Fort Funston, we watch the hang gliders jump from the sheer cliffside and soar high above the ocean. In Pacifica, we see pods of dolphins playfully leaping in and out of the sea. Along Point Montara Beach and Half Moon Bay, there are amazing tide pools—tiny habitats full of colorful creatures like anemones, jellyfish and sea urchins. At Ocean Beach, we skip rocks across the water while watching surfers brave the unpredictable waves. I hope you enjoy these musical snapshots of life along the Pacific Ocean in Nor Cal.

**Mary Fineman** is a composer, performer, and teacher whose music crosses genres. Originally from Baltimore, she trained as a classical pianist, studied music theory with Grace Newsom Cushman, and moved to Montreal for piano studies with Philip Cohen and Lauretta Altman. She taught at Concordia University, studied jazz at

McGill, and later taught at Temple Jr. College in Texas. The Muse entered her life suddenly in 2003. With a commission from the James Irvine Foundation, Mary orchestrated her song cycle “*It’s about Love*”, performed by the Oakland Symphony in 2014. She’s performed at the Paramount Theater, Piedmont Piano Company, Chapel of the Chimes, the Marsh Berkeley, as well as fundraisers and house concerts. Mary is involved in the ongoing recording of more than seventy songs and piano works, having released four CD’s, with two new CD’s and a piano book planned for 2021. Learn more (and find lyrics) at [www.maryfineman.com](http://www.maryfineman.com)

*And The World Spins ‘Round, ‘Round* is a piano work that also exists as part of the orchestral song cycle “It’s about Love”. It is a song without words, and in its orchestral version, it is the opening piece. The theme of love runs through the original four pieces, exploring the love of nature and the sacredness of the everyday, and love that endures alongside deep loss. This piece has an opening 32 bar chorale which woke me out of sleep one day. I dedicate this performance to the late Michael Morgan.

**John G. Bilotta** was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, but has spent most his life in the San Francisco Bay Area where he studied composition with Frederick Saunders. His works have been performed by soloists and ensembles around the world including Rarescale, Earplay, the Talea Ensemble, the Washington Square Contemporary Music Society, Chamber Mix, North/South Consonance, Musica Nova, the Avenue Winds, the Presidio Ensemble, the Boston String Quartet, the San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra, the Kiev Philharmonic, the Oakland Civic Orchestra, San Francisco Cabaret Opera, Bluegrass Opera, Boston Metro Opera, the Thompson Street Opera, New Fangled Opera, Floating Opera and VocalWorks. He serves on the Board of Directors for Goat Hall Productions and on the Executive Committee of the Society of Composers, Inc. He is currently president of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of NACUSA.

*Tres Canciones y Danzas* for guitar were written in 2016 in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of two close friends. Each of the three pieces in this work consists of a canción paired with a faster-paced dance.

**Dr. Greg A Steinke** is retired, former Joseph Naumes Endowed Chair of Music/Art and Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Marylhurst University, Marylhurst, Oregon; Associate Director, Ernest Bloch Music Festival (‘93–97) and Director, Composers Symposium (‘90–97) (Newport, OR); served as the National Chairman of the Society of Composers, Inc. (1988–97). Composer of chamber and symphonic music and author with published/recorded works and performances across the U. S. and internationally; speaker on interdisciplinary arts, and oboist specializing in contemporary music. Dr. Steinke is a past national president of NACUSA (1012-19) and also currently serves on the NACUSA Cascadia Chapter Board.

*A VORTEX OF URGENT WINDS* Image Music XIII, from *Songs of the Fire Circles* for Guitar Solo. This piece is another in a whole series of pieces identified by the composer as “Image Music,” which explore Native American cultural ideas and relationships and are based on a poetic image (here excerpted from *Songs of the Fire Circles* by K’os Naahaabii). The formal plan of the music is loosely tied to the poetic material and is approached somewhat impressionistically and freely by the composer.

Based upon Song XXVIII†  
Struggling vainly to regain  
The life-giving source,  
Sparks exploded in the air, swept by  
A vortex of urgent winds  
Filling with flame.

Brilliant colors in small  
Streaming balls filled  
A mind flushed of all  
Thought known before this time.

Blue, yellow, black, red,  
Streamers in chaotic undulation  
As the singing voices welled in unison  
And a black ominous storm cloud  
In a pulsating universe  
Filled with shimmering electrical hum  
Shot the spheres with lightning bolts.

K'os Naahaabii (Don Jordan)

†from *Songs of the Fire Circles* ©1977, Blue Oak Press Auburn, CA

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A native of California, **Steve Mobia** (b. 1953) expressed an early interest in music but chose instead to study filmmaking and was later involved with the SF Suicide Club, Cacophony Society and Burning Man. Having a strong fascination for nocturnal dreams, he also led exploration groups which met in unusual locations in order to re-enact dreams. His fiction writing and film work also arise out of his interest in the subconscious - often working with metaphor and non-literal situations. In an effort to conceive of more interesting music for his movie soundtracks, Steve began to study music formally in 1995 by taking night classes at San Francisco City College with Jerry Mueller and followed this in the next two decades by writing several pieces of concert music that aim to transport the listener into associative realms.

The title refers to the recent interest in “stem cell research.” Here the music is a crude analogy to premature undifferentiated cells that can develop into cells with different functions. Within “cell” or “seed” chords, the central melodic motive is heard but at that time is undifferentiated. Rhythm and time is what gives birth to motives that become independently functioning entities when they are recognized in memory. As a whole the piece vacillates between primal functions and developed functions.

**Nancie Kester** is a recently retired faculty member of the Music Department at Diablo Valley College. She currently teaches piano, theory and composition in her independent Berkeley studio. Ms. Kester received a BA in music composition from California State University, East Bay. Ms. Kester has composed and arranged numerous works for chorus, piano and instrumental ensembles and won prizes in the 2012, 2013 and 2015 MTAC Composer's Today competitions. After completing a Masters of Music Education, Kodaly Emphasis from Holy Names College and teaching Kodaly for several years, Ms. Kester received a Gerbode Foundation grant for training local musicians to become music teachers in the Kodaly approach. Ms. Kester has also been involved in the collection, publication, arrangement and performance of traditional songs from California and the West. She is a co-author and partner in Calicanto Associates, publisher of books, CDs, choral arrangements, and musical plays featuring songs with historical relevance. In this endeavor, Nancie has given workshops and performances throughout the United States.

*Desert Moonlight* is a tone poem for two guitars and flute. This composition was inspired by a traditional Japanese folk song of the same name. The original song (very old) might have been written about the Tottori Sand Dunes, located in Tottori Prefecture on Honshu Island in Japan. *Desert Moonlight* incorporates variants of the Hirajoshi scale. The composer drew inspiration from the traditional Japanese instruments: shakuhachi and koto.

**Davide Verotta** was born in an Italian town close to Milano and moved to San Francisco as an eager twenty-six-year-old. A professor at UCSF in biomathematics and statistics (gasp) for thirty years, he has been actively involved in the SF new music scene for a good twenty, and eventually left math behind to concentrate exclusively on composing. He studied piano at the Milano conservatory ages ago, and then at the SF conservatory. Composition is more recent, with studies at SFSU, where he earned an MA, and UC Davis, where he gave up on finishing a Ph.D. in composition mostly due to ... commuting (can't go anywhere in the Bay Area these days). Davide teaches piano and composition privately and at the Community Music Center in

SF. He has received numerous local commissions, international competition prizes, and composition grants. For more information, please visit his web site at [www.davideverotta.com](http://www.davideverotta.com).

*Anittam id Ossor* is a bit of a riddle of a piece for flute, and guitar that was derived from my *Rosso di Mattina* for clarinet, bass clarinet and guitar. Where the original piece has a mood of worried expectation, this one is more wondering about its somewhat brusque beginning.

**John Beeman** is a composer living in the San Francisco Bay Area. He studied with Peter Fricker and William Bergsma at the University of Washington where he received his Master's degree. Mr. Beeman is the composer of three operas, symphonic and chamber works and numerous choral compositions. Works have been performed by the Santa Rosa Symphony, Boston Metro Opera, the Ives Quartet, Paul Drescher, and the Oregon Repertory Singers. He has received awards through Meet the Composer, the American Composers Forum and ASCAP. Currently he is working on an opera about Ishi, the last Native American of his tribe to come out of the wilderness.

*Adagio and Dance* for flute and guitar is an exciting tour de force for both instruments. It was premiered in 2005 by guitarist, Michael Bautista in Palo Alto, California. This composition was inspired by Concerto Antico written by British composer, Richard Harvey.

**Sheli Nan** composes music that defies boundaries. She is a composer, teacher, pianist, harpsichordist, percussionist and author. Her Baroque and Classical training coupled with having lived all over the world produce a unique sound; a 21st century harmony. Giving credit to earlier musical iterations what she composes is fresh, invigorating, accessible and moving. Her music is performed locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. She composes from solo harpsichord and piano up to string quartets, chamber music and orchestra. Her choral music encompasses opera, (and librettos) Oratorios and Requiems. Sheli has over 90 pieces that have been published by PRB Productions, Screaming Mary Music, and Tech-Clazz Publishing Co. In addition to her classical performances Sheli has performed with The World Connection – Afro-beat music, Salsa and Reggae bands. Her books and CDs are available on Amazon.com and can also be ordered on her website. For more information please go to: [shelinan.com](http://shelinan.com).

Journey —The Song Cycle is a musical exploration of profound moments in our life journey. The lyrics were composed by me and weave stories of angst and loss with poetry and hope. There are four songs in the cycle: *Longing to Leave*, *The Canoe*, *The River*, and *The Path*.

**Brian Holmes** has written many works for solo voice and for chorus. He has been composer in residence of four local choruses, including the San Francisco Choral Artists and Vivace Youth Chorus of San Jose. He has written a dozen song cycles, with accompaniments ranging from solo viola to full orchestra. His *Amherst Requiem* won the American Prize in Choral Music in 2012. He has composed over seventy-five Christmas carols; luckily, none of them appear on this program. He has retired from the Physics and Astronomy Department of San Jose State University, where he taught a course on the physics of music.

*Thermodynamics* and *Particle physics* are from a song cycle called Updike's Science, based on poems of John Updike. *Thermodynamics* depicts the ennui associated with the cooling of cocoa. *Particle Physics* is about neutrinos, abundant, light subatomic particles that hardly interact with matter. *The Horseshoe Song* is from *A Very Little Sphinx*, a group of poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay. In it, a young girl contemplates a horseshoe and imagines the trips it has taken. (The song will not be played tonight.) *The Jolly Hunter* is a setting of a poem by Charles Causley. It is more humorous than a Bugs Bunny cartoon, since it involves death.

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BENEFACTORS

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Anne Baldwin	Brian Field	Karl and JoAnn Schmidt
Laura Barton	Gary Friedman	Kent Smith
John Beeman	Jacob E. Goodman	Artifex Software
John Bilotta	Susan and Stephen Harrison	Greg Steinke
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Sondta Clark	Sheli Nan	

**The National Association of Composers, U.S.A.** (NACUSA), a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in 1933 by Henry Hadley originally as the National Association of Composers and Conductors. It is one of the oldest organizations devoted to the promotion and performance of music by Americans. Many of the most distinguished composers of the 20th and 21st Centuries have been NACUSA members. NACUSA has chapters in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco (NACUSA SF), Baton Rouge, Virginia, Texas, and Tennessee. The NACUSA SF chapter produces four concerts each season featuring music by its members. Please visit the NACUSA SF chapter website at <http://www.nacusasf.org>.