



REDCAT

PARTCH Ensemble

- LSD Ride

Music

JUN 14 - 15, 2024
8:30 PM



REDCAT

ROY AND EDNA DISNEY
CALARTS THEATER

CaLARTS

PARTCH
ENSEMBLE

We gratefully acknowledge that we operate on the traditional lands of the Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash peoples—including the Gabrieleño, Fernandeño, and Ventureño; members of the Takic and Chumashan language families; and other Indigenous peoples who made their homes in and around the area we now call Los Angeles. We honor their ancestors past, present, and future, and recognize their continued existence and contributions to our society.

PARTCH Ensemble

• LSD Ride

Three Dances (1952)

HARRY PARTCH

Samba—A DECENT AND HONORABLE MISTAKE

Heartbeat Rhythm—RHYTHM OF THE WOMB--MELODY OF THE GRAVE

Afro-Chinese Minuet—HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Reið (Raidö)II [Ride/Journey] (2024)

JEFFREY HOLMES

First Performance

Progressions

HARRY PARTCH

Intro + *Progressions Within One Octave* (1942)

Sonata Dementia: Abstraction & Delusion (1949)

Five Intrusions (1950)

Study #1 Olympos' Pentatonic

The Wind (Ella Young, Lao-tze)

Study #2 Archytas' Enharmonic

The Street (Willard Motley)

The Waterfall (Ella Young)

— INTERMISSION —

LSD: Huxley's Last Trip—selected scenes

ANNE LEBARON

Librettists: Gerd Stern, Ed Rosenfeld, and Anne LeBaron

1. Scene 1: Huxley's Last Trip—Part 1
2. Scene 3: Double Helix: Soliloquy No. 1 (*a twisted example...*)
3. Scene 6: Three Lunches: Soliloquy No. 2 (*Finnegan's Wake*)
4. Scene 8: Mary Meyer and JFK

The Cast (in order of appearance)

Aldous Huxley

SCOTT GRAFF

Laura Huxley; LSD Trio (Death)

AUBREY BABCOCK

LSD Trio (Love); Jackie Kennedy

ANNA SCHUBERT

LSD Trio (Sex); Marilyn Monroe

NELLE ANDERSON

James Watson; John F. Kennedy

DOMINIC DELZOMPO

Francis Crick; Timothy Leary

ALEC NORKEY

Albert Hofmann; Marshall McLuhan

JON KEENAN

Anita Hofmann; Mary Meyer

MARIA ELENA ALTANY

Erin Barnes (Diamond Marimba), **Alison Bjorkedal** (Harp, Kithara), **Tim Feeny** (Cloud Chamber Bowls, Canons), **Dustin Donahue** (Bass Marimba), **Vicki Ray** (Chromelodeon), **John Schneider** (Guitars, Canons, & Voice), **Derek Stein** (Adapted Viola), **Nick Terry** (Bass Marimba & Boo), **Alex Wand** (Canons & Surrogate Kithara)

Special Guests: **Nic Gerpe** (Piano), **Isaura String Quartet** (Mads Falcone, Emily Call, Betsy Rettig, Wendy Richman), **Andreas Levisianos** (Conductor), **Brian Walsh** (Clarinet), **Scott Worthington** (Contrabass), **Richard An** (rehearsal pianist), **Daniel Corral** (Harmonic Canon)

As always, our gratitude to the artisans who have helped recreate Partch's instruments: Skip Abelson (Diamond & Bass Marimbas), Kent Arnold (Chromelodeon), Greg Brandt (Adapted Guitar II), Scott Hackleman (Kithara, Harmonic Canons), Robert Portillo (Adapted Viola & Janus II/III canons)

This performance is made possible in part by a grant from the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. This performance is made possible in part by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Department of Arts and Culture.



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
City of Los Angeles



ABOUT THE WORKS

We begin this evening's concert with the **Three Dances** that begin the third section of Partch's *Plectra & Percussion Dances* (1952). The composer warned, "It's an amazing fact that the world of dance music, and of Latin American dance music particularly, has produced an army of purists that is equal of anything that serious classical music can offer. I say this in order to advise you that the first scene, for example, "A Decent and Honorable Mistake," may not be recognizable to you as a samba. The second scene, "Rhythm of the Womb, Melody of the Grave," is based on a rhythmically contrapuntal heartbeat. The third scene, "Happy Birthday to You!" begins with an African-sounding marimba and somehow gets involved with a Chinese-sounding guitar in a pentatonic melody, and so I call it an Afro-Chinese Minuet." This last dance ends with these directions: "Slowly enough that canon TRIADS are distinct," after which they are to be played "faster than the previous runs so that the triads are NOT distinct." The harmonies of each of those descending triads are wildly divergent, as if the composer is pausing to reminisce about various years past, but finally admits that as a 51-year old they are, in fact, a blur.

Reið (Raidō) II is the sixth in a cycle of chamber pieces I have been composing for the last several years where each work is associated with a specific ancient Runic symbol. "Rei. (Raidō)" directly translates to "ride" or "journey." A journey on horseback is implied, but this can also be interpreted as an experience which connects this life with the afterlife, or this realm with other realms of existence or consciousness. The repetitive and percussive nature of a galloping horse is often further associated with shamanic drumming that accompanies certain primordial esoteric practices.

In my work *Reio (Raidō)* there are 3 groupings of instruments and players, conveying three types of microtonal tunings: a Chromelodeon, tuned to a 43-note division of the octave based on ratios derived from just intonation; a piano and a harp whose standard equal temperament is tuned apart by the difference of a 7th partial of the overtone series, or approximately in equal tempered 1/6th tones; and 3 percussionists who play a variety of indefinite pitched or noise-based percussion instruments. In this dramatic representation

of both an ancient and futuristic ritual, these various tunings and timbres are utilized through a carefully controlled harmonic, motivic, and formal personal language, that unifies structure and architecture with intensity and expression. —Jeffrey Holmes

In 1942, Harry Partch gave a lecture-demonstration at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. After introducing the now famous 43-note/octave scale on his newly created Chromolodian (sic), he proceeded to submerge the students in an extraordinary ear-bending sequence of chord ***Progressions Within One Octave*** that even today are capable of jarring the most seasoned Modernist sensibilities. Apologizing in advance that these auditory experiments, "...afford a little vision into a new world of musical resources—hardly more than a glimpse through a keyhole," they turned out to be a peek into the future, as this music would soon become the opening of his ***Sonata Dementia*** (1949), exquisitely orchestrated with the addition of six newly built instruments.

Those instruments were also explored in Partch's chimerically titled suite of twelve compositions called ***Intrusions***. This subset of five include his ***Two Studies on Ancient Greek Scales*** that were originally for solo Harmonic Canon, to which he later added a bass marimba obligatto. Another Canon was strung and bridged in his 43-note octave from C#3-C#4 for ***The Wind*** whose hyperchromatic arpeggios hauntingly evoke two moods of that natural phenomenon that can both caress or destroy. The first text comes from the pen of Irish born poet Ella Young who lived in the Bay Area for many years, with the second from 6th century Chinese poet/philosopher Lao Tze that Partch had previously set in his 1935 memoir *Bitter Music*.

In ***The Street***, the chilly wind that blows over the jails and cartracks of Chicago sets the final paragraphs of Willard Motley's 1947 best seller *Knock on Any Door* that describes a young Italian immigrant's downward spiral from altar boy to criminal. And finally, Ella Young—also a Celtic mythologist who believed in fairies, pixies, and praised the benefits of talking to trees— returns to interrogate ***The Waterfall***, curious as to why it would possibly seek oblivion after such a vivacious life in the sunlight. — John Schneider

LSD: Huxley's Last Trip charts the powerful cultural, political, and spiritual forces ignited by Albert Hofmann's discovery of lysergic acid diethylamide. Represented by three sopranos, the LSD Trio (Love, Sex, and Death) embarks on a journey, encountering a diverse cast of characters influential in science, literature, entertainment, national security, and politics. The scenes in this evening's concert form the completion of nearly a decade of composing and development, paving the way toward a full production.

Before LSD jump-started the counterculture movement, it was misused by the CIA for nefarious purposes. Despite its later use as a spiritual and recreational drug, it came to be ostracized, demonized, and feared. It took over half a century for the therapeutic value of LSD and other psychedelics, used in medical and psychiatric settings, to gain recognition and respect. The panorama of dramatic events surrounding LSD includes scientific discoveries, murders, classified CIA experiments, festivities, and extraordinary meetings of minds among iconic figures in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Tonight's concert features four scenes out of a total of nine, along with two soliloquies. Here is a brief synopsis to provide context: *Bicycle Day* recounts Albert Hofmann's discovery of LSD in 1943. After languishing for five years in his lab, LSD materializes as a soprano trio and accompanies him on the first-ever documented 'trip.' Having taken a small amount, he experiences its effects while riding his bicycle home. Ten years later, Aldous Huxley recollects his encounter with mescaline in his novella, *The Doors of Perception*. That same year (1953), the CIA initiates Project MK-ULTRA, a secret mind-control project. In the early 60's, Washington socialite Mary Meyer, who wants to train as a guide to 'turn on' important political figures, visits Timothy Leary. On November 22, 1963, Aldous Huxley, suffering from cancer, asks his wife Laura to inject him with LSD. As he passes away, the news of JFK's assassination is broadcast.

The four scenes on tonight's program are woven into the events just described.

Scene 1, Huxley's Last Trip (part 1): Aldous, on his deathbed, reminisces with his wife Laura.

Scene 3, Double Helix: James Watson and Francis Crick celebrate their discovery of DNA at the Eagle Pub in Cambridge, England, with Crick claiming he envisioned the double helix structure after taking LSD.

Scene 6, Three Lunches: the LSD Trio hosts three luncheons, transcending time and space: Albert and Anita Hofmann with Aldous and Laura Huxley at the Hotel Sonnenberg in Switzerland; Aldous Huxley and Timothy Leary at the Harvard Faculty Club; and Timothy Leary and Marshall McLuhan at the Palm Court in New York's Plaza Hotel.

Scene 8, Mary Meyer and JFK: After his lover Mary Meyer gives him a hit of LSD in his White House bedroom, JFK hallucinates that wife Jackie and Marilyn Monroe have joined their tryst.

Philosophical soliloquies from Aldous Huxley are appended to Scenes 3 and 6.

LSD: Huxley's Last Trip received initial funding from Opera America's Grants for Female Composers program, supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. A 2021 residency at MacDowell provided a lovely studio for composing some of the music on this program. I'm grateful to the players and board of the PARTCH Ensemble for their unwavering enthusiasm and moral support. This evening's performance is dedicated to the late Ed Rosenfeld, one of our librettists and a passionate advocate of the opera.

—Anne LeBaron

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Anne LeBaron, an LA-based experimentalist composer embracing unusual challenges, and an innovative performer on the harp, first wrote for the Partch instruments in 1990. She has spent nearly a decade forging the music for LSD: Huxley's Last Trip. Venues in Italy, Mexico, Sydney, Vienna, Sweden, Kazakhstan, Russia, New York, Los Angeles, and elsewhere have programmed her works written for chamber ensemble, orchestra, opera, and chorus, and presented her as a performer. Major awards include the Alpert Award in the Arts, a Fromm Foundation commission, a Guggenheim, a Fulbright, NEA grants, and artist residencies at Bogliasco and Bellagio in Italy. Her operas celebrate legendary female figures, such as Marie Laveau in *Crescent City*. Her first opera, *Blue Calls Set You Free* (a more compact version of the large-scale *The E. and O. Line*), was performed earlier this year as part of a Russian festival celebrating women composers of opera. *Suction*, a monodrama for soprano and vacuum cleaner presented last month in Pasadena, featured Laura Bohn as the riveting soloist. LeBaron's ongoing multi-year project, *The Heroine with a Thousand Faces*, honors outstanding women across time and space with musical portraits. She taught in the Experimental Sound Practices and Music Composition Program at CalArts for twenty-two years.

Maria Elena Altany is a third generation Xicana soprano from San Francisco, currently based in Los Angeles. She is known for her acrobatic high notes and daring performances on the cutting edge of opera and classical music. Her roles with LA Opera include Susanna in *Figaro!* (90210) and Sacrifice in the premiere of *Las Tres Mujeres de Jerusalén* conducted by James Conlon. She recently starred in Mark Grey's *Birds in The Moon*, in which Mark Swed of the *Los Angeles Times* declared that she "soars in song." She premiered the role at the New York Philharmonic's Bandwagon 2 Festival, and then at The Broad Stage in Santa Monica.

Soprano, composer, and interdisciplinary improviser **Nelle Anderson** seeks the nexus of opera, pop, and Fluxus. She develops pieces as Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), externalizing the singer's inner

monologue, practice-room processes, and spiritual motivations. She has toured internationally as a soloist with Ensemble Caprice, Bach Society of Minnesota, and Early Music Seattle. Recent roles include Phaino in Kate Soper's *HERE BE SIRENS* and Anna 1 in Kurt Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins*. She is a certified Reiki Master, a practice which compels her artmaking and voice teaching, and she releases experimental pop as Soubrette. She holds a BA in Classical Voice Performance from Bard College and a Performer-Composer MFA from California Institute of the Arts.

Genre-bending mezzo-soprano **Audrey Babcock** has captivated audiences worldwide with her mesmerizing performances and versatile vocal and dramatic range, establishing herself as a compelling interpreter in the world of opera. Her exceptional ability to embody character and her passion for craft have earned her a place among the most esteemed vocalists of her generation. Engagements for the 2023-2024 season include her role debut as Amneris in *Aida* and Mrs. Gibbs in Ned Rorem's *Our Town* with Utah Festival, Flora in Opera Omaha's *La Traviata*, her debut as Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana*, Augusta Tabor in *Ballad of Baby Doe* and will reprise Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*.

Baritone **Dominic Delzompo** is a 2016 alumnus of the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. Recent work includes returning to UCLA as a Guest Artist in May of 2024 to debut a role in *The Grand Hotel Tartarus*, a new work by Richard Danielpour produced by Opera UCLA as the final opera directed by Peter Kazaras at UCLA. In the 2022-2023 season, he debuted roles in world premiere performances of two operas: Arkady Druganin in the concert world premiere of *Arhipov* (October 2022), and Gorgon in the stage premiere of *Quake* (June 2023). In July of 2023, he sang in the chorus of Verdi's *Requiem* under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel at the Hollywood Bowl with the LA Phil and the Los Angeles Master Chorale. In August of 2023, he flew to Houston for the premiere of a 20 minute song cycle he composed about our relationships to technology and social media, commissioned by Federico De Michelis, and performed by De Michelis and Kirill Kuzmin during the inaugural performance of The New Song Project. He has sung in the Los Angeles Master Chorale for several recent concerts; these concerts include "Heaven & Earth" in October 2023, which featured the music of Reena Esmail and Philip Glass, and the LA Phil's performances *Karawane* and *Daphnis et Chloe* in December 2023. He is a staff member of the choir at St. John's Episcopal Cathedral in Los Angeles, where he sings regularly on Sunday mornings. In prior concert seasons, Dominic has sung onstage at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Hollywood Bowl, Pauley Pavilion, and the Rose Bowl (and other venues). You can find him on the internet.

Bass/baritone **Scott Graff** has appeared as a soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Musica Angelica, the Carmel Bach Festival, California Bach Society, Synchrony, and HEX. He has originated roles in several new operas; most recently he performed the role of The Therapist in the premiere of Vera Ivanova's *The Double*, premiered in 2022 as part of Synchrony's inaugural Opera Festival. An active ensemble singer, he is entering his 25th season with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, where he is part of their touring company presenting Orlando di Lasso's monumental *Lagime di San Pietro* (directed by Peter Sellars) which premiered in Los Angeles and has been seen around the world, including two performances at the Salzburg Festival. Scott can also be heard on the soundtracks of more than 70 feature films and television projects.

Versatile tenor, **Jon Lee Keenan**, is a native of Las Vegas, Nevada. Heavily influenced by his father, a classical clarinetist and jazz saxophonist, Jon cultivated an interest in performing a variety of music at an early age. In 2007, Jon was asked to join the LA Master Chorale and has been featured as a soloist at Walt Disney Concert Hall in numerous critically acclaimed performances. Highlights with LAMC include the role of "Evangelist" in

Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, tenor soloist in Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Magnificat*.

As an in-demand performer of new music, Jon has helped create many new exciting characters with the experimental opera producers at The Industry LA: "Clyde Barrow" in *Bonnie and Clyde* (Andrew McIntosh), "Gunner" in *War of the Worlds* (Anne Gosfeld) and the "Captain" in *Sweet Land* among many others. Other recent performances of note include "A sunbeam's Architecture" with poetry by e.e. cummings and music by Elliot Carter at RedCat.

Described as "luminously expressive" with a "silvery voice" that "moves from innocence to devastation with an actor's ease," **Anna Schubert** loves bringing new voices, stories, and musical ideas to life. She enjoys an eclectic career that takes her all over the world - premiering new works, performing old favorites, and recording a wide variety of sounds for film and television. Over the past few years, she has performed in several world premieres, most notably creating the role of Bibi in the world premiere of Ellen Reid's Pulitzer Prize-winning opera *p r i s m* with LA Opera and Beth Morrison Projects. Her performance in *p r i s m* was described as "revelatory" (Catherine Womack), and subsequently led to a successful run at Theatro Municipal de São Paulo. She is also credited with premiering the role of L in Anne LeBaron's *LSD: The Opera*, the role of Klara in Vera Ivanova's chamber opera *The Double*, and most recently, the role of Lady Reason in Kate Soper's opera acclaimed new opera *The Romance of the Rose*. This spring, she will join Long Beach Opera and the Martha Graham Dance Company as the soprano soloist in Kate Soper's *Ipsa Dixit*.

Outside the world of classical vocals, Anna enjoys a stimulating and versatile career as a session singer. Her solo soprano vocals and extended techniques can be heard dramatically soaring over orchestra and choir in the films *Birds of Prey* (2020) and *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3* (2023), as well as the Netflix series *Midnight Mass* and the HBO series *Raised by Wolves*.

Todd Strange is a lyric tenor, specializing in opera, solo concert work, musical theater, session singing and professional choral/ensemble work. He is a member of the LA Master Chorale, LA Opera, and a soloist in regional opera companies/symphonies across the US and abroad. highlights include leading/supporting roles with The LA Philharmonic, Long Beach Opera, New York City Opera, Arizona Opera, Ohio Light Opera, Utah Festival Opera, Stockton Opera and San Diego Opera. Todd has been featured on various recordings: LA Phil and LA Master Chorale, and in principal roles with Ohio Light Opera/Albany Records. Todd has sung on various popular film scores, including the blockbuster, *Sing!* as the operatic Camel. Todd had the privilege of working with John Williams for *Star Wars/The Last Jedi*. Other movies include *Thelma the Unicorn*, *Avatar 2*, *The Haunted Mansion*, *Us*, *The Lion King*, *Smallfoot*, *Star Wars/Rogue One*, *Frozen*, *Minions*, *Bumblebee*, and *The Simpsons*. In 2022, Todd portrayed the role of Donald Trump in Anthony Davis' Pulitzer Prize winning new opera, *The Central Park 5* with Long Beach Opera, which will later be released as a new studio recording with the same cast. He will reprise the role with Detroit Opera next season in May of 2025. Todd is also a professional stand-up comedian, sketch comedian and actor. He can be seen in many iconic comedy clubs in LA, blending comedy with Opera.

Andreas Levisianos is a conductor, composer and musicologist from Samos, Greece. He has performed music from different periods of the western music history and from various styles, including orchestral, chamber, solo and electroacoustic works as a conductor and pianist. He has served as the music director and conductor of the annual Open Days festival in Athens, Greece, as the conductor of the 'Joseph Haydn' Symphony Orchestra in Vienna, for the Ensemble Continuum and the Ergon Ensemble in Athens, the 'Philharmonic Ploiesti' in Romania, the 'London Classical Soloists' in London, Jacaranda in Los Angeles, the CalArts Orchestra and more. He has written music for various combinations of instruments, electronic and acoustic and collaborated with choreographers, directors and visual artists in a variety of intermedia projects.

He has participated in numerous festivals across the globe such as Art Night in London, Tectonics in Athens, Neapolis in Berlin, Fringe in Edinburgh, the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, SEAMUS in Miami and more. Currently residing in London, he is also working with the Universal Music Group on music information analysis. He holds a Performer – Composer Doctorate of Musical Arts from CalArts, a Double Master’s degree in Conducting and Composition from the University of Oklahoma, a Bachelor’s degree in Musicology from the University of Athens, and a Piano Diploma from the National Conservatory of Greece.

PARTCH Ensemble, the Grammy® Award winning & triple Grammy® nominated new music group, specializes in the music & instruments of the iconoclastic American Maverick composer Harry Partch, who created some of the most alluring and emotionally powerful music of the 20th century. He composed music for drama, dance-theater, multi-media, vocals and chamber music—all to be performed on the extraordinary orchestra of instruments that he designed and built himself.

They have performed for the LA County Museum of Art, UCLA’s Partch Centennial Celebration, Sacramento’s Festival of New American Music, Mills College, UNM Albuquerque, the Getty Center, Repertory Dance Theatre of Salt Lake City, Carlsbad Music Festival, Jacaranda Music, Guadalajara International Book Fair, Grand Performances, Brooklyn’s Roulette, Philadelphia’s Kimmel Center, the San Francisco Symphony, and South Korea’s Tongyeong International Music Festival. In 2004, they made their REDCAT debut premiering Harry Partch’s *Bitter Music*, and have returned every year since. Their collaboration with Philadelphia’s PRISM Saxophone Quartet include Lisa Bielawa’s Emmy Award winning opera for TV/Internet *VIREO: The Autobiography of a Witches Accuser*, and the CD of newly commissioned works *Color Theory* (XAS Records). *SONATA DEMENTIA*, Volume 3 of their award-winning Bridge Records “Music of Harry Partch” series, was released in 2019, while their premiere recording of the complete *The Wayward* will be released by Bridge in 2025.

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