

Hotel Elefant's "speakOUT," featuring composer Paola Prestini



by The Editor , March 3, 2015.



Hotel Elefant's spring concert continues their third season theme "speakOUT," representing artists who are utilizing music to reflect on issues both personal and political. Not only will the program "speakOUT" by focusing on these issues, but the program itself will raise its voice by featuring an all-female cast of composers, presenting innovative work by featured composer Paola Prestini along with emerging composers Lainie Fefferman and Leaha Maria Villarreal. The ensemble will perform Prestini's *Yoani*, with a libretto by Royce Vavrek, including a brand new movement from the work, and *Inngerutit*; the world premiere of Lainie Fefferman's Hotel Elefant-commissioned piece *Impostor Syndrome*; and the world premiere of Leaha Maria Villarreal's *This is How We Love*.

Hotel Elefant continues its third season "speakOUT" on March 8, 2015 (National Women's Day) at 8 p.m., featuring an all-female cast of composers at SubCulture. Focusing on music of personal or political nature and highlighting artists and issues that look inward, bear witness, and report back on their findings, this concert will feature the work of the "amorously evocative" (New York Times) composer Paola Prestini. The evening's program will include Prestini's multimedia song cycle *Yoani*—featuring footage by Carmen Kovens and a new movement with lyrics by Royce Vavrek—and her solo work for clarinet, film, and electronics *Inngerutit*.

The concert will also include Alex Temple and Jenny Olivia Johnson's electronic work *It's hard even to say it.* and world premieres of Hotel Elefant-commissioned piece *Impostor Syndrome* by Lainie Fefferman plus *This is How We Love* by Leaha Maria Villarreal, written for the ensemble. "We were deeply drawn to the work of these powerfully-voiced women, who— through their music—confront, explore, and question unconventional and controversial topics," says Executive Director Mary Kouyoumdjian, "Hotel Elefant will also speak out by actively programming music by a portion of the new music population that is often underrepresented in our community, and we hope that this concert encourages others to seek out music by women composers as well."

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About Hotel Elephant

Hotel Elephant is a contemporary music ensemble dedicated to the works of innovative, living composers. Founded by composers Leaha Maria Villarreal and Mary Kouyoumdjian, Hotel Elephant brings an awareness of today's music to the general public through commissions, performances, and moderated discussions between composers, performers, and audiences. Committed to modern sounds and sonic explorations, this "audacious and unafraid" (New Music Box) ensemble highlights living composers who are blurring lines, pushing boundaries, and fostering creativity. With a flexible roster of over twenty musicians, Time Out New York hails Hotel Elephant as "one of New York's fastest rising new-music outfits." www.hotelelephant.org

About Paola Prestini

Named a "composer-impresario" by the New Yorker, Paola Prestini is a composer and entrepreneur. Her compositions have been deemed "radiant"[and] amorously evocative" by The New York Times and praised by composers such as Terry Riley, "music [that] speaks from the heart and inspires" and by Osvaldo Golijov, "wrenching and tender and luminous and pure and exuberant: always vivid and always generous." Prestini's commissions, grants, and awards have come from Opera America, the New York Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall, Bay Chamber Concerts, Krannert Center, New Music USA, ASCAP, the BMI Fund, NYSCA (two Individual Artist grants), the Trust for Mutual Understanding, Concert Artist Guild, The Cary Trust, and the ASCAP Morton Gould Composers Award. She received her B.M. and M.M. at the Juilliard School and has studied with Samuel Adler, Robert Beaser, and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. www.paolaprestini.com

About Lainie Fefferman

Lainie Fefferman did her undergrad at Yale (where she studied music and near eastern languages) and is currently in her sixth year of the composition grad program at Princeton.

Her collaborators include: pianist Michael Mizrahi, guitarist James Moore, bassist Eleonore Oppenheim, electric guitar quartet Dither, Sō Percussion, the New York Virtuoso Singers, NOW ensemble, Newspeak, pianist Kathleen Supové, TILT Brass, and ETHEL. Her recent performance projects include writing for, laptoping, and singing in laptop ensemble Sideband, writing for and singing alto with avant vocal trio Celestial Mechanics (with sopranos Anne Hege and Sarah Paden), and writing for and singing with minimalist folk band Phthia (with Missy Mazzoli and Mila Henry on melodica, Sara Phillips Budde on clarinet, Andie Springer on fiddle, and James Moore on banjo. Her works have also been heard in Ireland, Holland, England, and Florida, and her music has been featured in many concerts and festivals, including the Sonic Festival and the Floating Points Festival. www.lainiefefferman.com

About Jenny Olivia Johnson

Composer/scholar Jenny Olivia Johnson was born in Santa Monica and raised in Claremont, CA. She attended Barnard College and earned a master's degree in composition from Manhattan School of Music and a Ph.D. in music at New York University. She is currently an assistant professor of music at Wellesley College. Her music—which has been described as "gorgeous, ominous, and hypnotic" by the Boston Globe, "stunning in its simplicity and power" by the Boston Musical Intelligencer, and "iridescent, shimmering, and evocative" by Steve Smith of Time Out New York—ranges from compressed electronic operas and epic pop songs to abstract chamber works, multi-media meditations using amplified instruments and video, and more recently, installation works involving interactive sound and lighting. Her first installation work, Glass Heart (Bells and Songs for Sylvia Plath) was commissioned by the Davis Museum at Wellesley College. www.jennyoliviajohnson.com

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About Alex Temple

A sound can evoke a time, a place, or a way of looking at the world. Alex Temple writes music that distorts and combines iconic sounds to create new meanings, often in service of surreal, cryptic or fantastical stories. In addition to performing her own works for voice and electronics, she has collaborated with performers and ensembles such as Mellissa Hughes, Timothy Andres, the American Composers Orchestra, Cadillac Moon Ensemble, and Spektral Quartet. She's currently working on a D.M.A. at Northwestern University and writing a podcast-opera about TV production company logos and the end of the world. www.alextemplmusic.com

About Leaha Maria Villarreal

Composer Leaha Maria Villarreal brings a contemporary focus to classical music. With works described as "visceral" (Lucid Culture) and "propulsive" (Bachtrack), her output includes music for dance, film, opera, and the concert hall. She has worked with organizations and ensembles such as Wild Rumpus, W4, Ear Heart Music, Boston New Music Initiative, BODYART, The Box is Empty, and PUBLIQuartet. Past composition teachers include Pulitzer Prize winner Roger Reynolds, Steven Kazuo Takasugi, and Chinary Ung. Villarreal holds a B.A. from the University of California, San Diego and studied at New York University with Julia Wolfe and Michael Gordon. www.leahamaria.com

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