

# SŌ PERCUSSION

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2022 | COBB GREAT HALL

## Sō Percussion is

Eric Cha-Beach, Josh Quillen,  
Adam Sliwinski, and Jason Treuting

This performance is sponsored by Delta Dental of Michigan;  
MSU College of Music Entrepreneurial Musical Artist in  
Residence Program. Media Sponsor: Michigan Radio

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# PROGRAM

## *Note to Self (2021)*

Nathalie Joachim (b. 1983)

## *Vodalities: Paradigms of Consciousness for the Human Voice (2021)*

Shodekeh Talifero (b. 1977)

featuring Dominic "Shodekeh" Talifero

## *Amid the Noise (2006)*

Jason Treuting (b. 1977)

featuring Dominic "Shodekeh" Talifero

and students from MSU College of Music

This performance will run approximately 75 minutes, with no intermission.

# Program Notes

## *Note to Self* - Nathalie Joachim

Though I've spent much of my life trying to quiet my inner voice, for this work, I chose to focus on and explore the thoughts that occupy my headspace as a result of my chronic anxiety.

*Note to Self*, for percussion quartet and recorded samples of my voice, takes the listener through different phases of cyclical thoughts and states of being that I experience regularly. Composed in three short movements—*Much More, Maybe, and Motivated*—this work examines the notion of having my inner voice embodied elsewhere, in an attempt to create new space for processing emotion. It also plays with repetition as an opportunity to bring new meaning, understanding, and perhaps some levity, to the language itself. Each movement is a reimagining of vocal incantations that, driven by imaginative, virtuosic, and whimsical percussion scoring, re-center and re-purpose my voice as a tool for healing.

—Nathalie Joachim

This work was co-commissioned for So Percussion by Andrew W. Siegel and Carnegie Hall. The World Premiere was given by So Percussion in Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall, New York City, on December 11, 2021.

## ***Vodalities: Paradigms of Consciousness for the Human Voice - Shodekeh Talifero***

*Vodalities: Paradigms of Consciousness for the Human Voice* seeks to illuminate the different modalities of the vocal arts utilized by not only me, but vocalists the world over. Through three movements composed specifically for Sō Percussion, with each focused on the vocal modalities, or “vodalities” of breath art, vocal percussion & beatboxing, Sō's challenge was to listen to, learn (& of course enjoy) each vocal movement, transcribe the pieces from a hip hop-based oral tradition construct to a system of western notation & finally through “technique transcription, “figure out which physical, percussion-based instruments & which members of the ensemble using those tools would be best suited to play each element of the overall compositional structure. In other words, welcome to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where compositional paradigms & a synthesis of learning styles can take on a whole new reversal of impact, influence & imagination.

- I. “The Universality of Breath Art”  
(Dedicated to Bobby McFerrin)
- II. “The Genealogy of Vocal Percussion”  
(Dedicated to Ella Fitzgerald)
- III: “The Mathematics of Beatboxing”  
(Dedicated to Doug E. Fresh: The Original Human Beatbox)

—Dominic “Shodekeh” Talifero

## ***Amid the Noise* - Jason Treuting**

*Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.*

- Max Ehrmann's *Desiderata*

Jason Treuting's *Amid the Noise* began as a soundtrack, which morphed into our third album and then into a flexible set of live music. Now it is a communal music-making project that can occur with a flexible number of musicians in almost any combination.

The musical ideas in *Amid the Noise* are abstract: drones, melodies, rhythms, textures, patterns. Originally, Sō Percussion orchestrated them on the instruments we had in our studio, but we've since discovered that accordion, organ, or tuba might play a satisfying drone as well as bowed vibraphone! Like Terry Riley's *In C*, this work maintains its identity and integrity even through wildly different realizations.

This modular concept allows us to conduct residencies that reach beyond percussion departments. Many kinds of students at a music school or conservatory can participate in *Amid the Noise*: vocalists, string quartets, wind and brass players, guitarists, and of course percussionists.

## Sō Percussion Bio

For twenty years and counting, Sō Percussion has redefined chamber music for the 21<sup>st</sup> century through an “exhilarating blend of precision and anarchy, rigor and bedlam” (*The New Yorker*). They are celebrated by critics, audiences and presenters for a dazzling range of work: for live performances in which “telepathic powers of communication” (*The New York Times*) bring to life the vibrant percussion repertoire; for an extravagant array of collaborations in classical music, pop, indie rock, contemporary dance, and theater; and for their work in education and community, creating opportunities and platforms for music and artists that explore the immense possibility of art in our time.

In the 2021-22 season, Sō Percussion returned to live concerts and continues to develop a range of online programs. In December 2021, they returned for their seventh featured concert at Carnegie Hall with an all-star cast of collaborators, including Grammy<sup>®</sup>-winning soprano Dawn Upshaw, pianist Gil Kalish, Nathalie Joachim (recipient of their inaugural Andrew W. Siegel Fellowship), Shodekeh Talifero, Caroline Shaw, and more. Last fall, they performed David Lang’s *man made* with the Cincinnati Symphony and touring their new Nonesuch Records album *Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part* with Shaw around the United States.

In addition to *Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part*, Sō welcomed a number of critically acclaimed albums in

2021: Caroline Shaw's *Narrow Sea* on Nonesuch Records, *A Record Of..* on Brassland Music with indie duo Buke and Gase, and a "moving version" (*The New York Times*) of Julius Eastman's "Stay On It" on new imprint Sō Percussion Editions. This adds to a catalogue of more than twenty-five albums featuring landmark recordings of works by David Lang, Steve Reich, Steve Mackey, and many other composers.

During the 2020-21 season of remote collaboration, Sō Percussion developed their innovative Flexible Commissions initiative through its New Works Development program, which asks composers to write pieces with multiple possible realizations, unlimited by specific instrumentation and able to be presented live or in online performance. Recent and upcoming Flexible Commissions include works by Bora Yoon, Darian Donovan Thomas, Claire Rousay, Kendall K. Williams, Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti, and Shodekeh Talifero.

Sō Percussion is in its eighth year as Edward T. Cone performers-in-residence at Princeton University. In addition to teaching chamber music, presenting concerts for the Princeton community, and collaborating with composers on new works, this year the members of Sō are working with Director of African Music Ensemble Olivier Tarpaga to design and teach a new course on rhythm. This course is offered as part of the undergraduate curriculum, exposing students to rhythmic practices from West African, Caribbean, European, South American, and North American traditions.

Since its first performance as a student ensemble in 1999, Sō Percussion has appeared at many of the most prestigious concert halls and festivals around the world, including Carnegie Hall, the Paris Philharmonie, the Barbican Centre, BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music), Walt Disney Hall with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel, the Lincoln Center Festival, and at the international TED conference in 2016. In 2020, Sō conducted an *Amid the Noise* residency at the University of Trinidad and Tobago and performed in the finals of Panorama with the Caribbean Airlines Skiffle Steel Orchestra. Sō has been featured on WNYC's *Radiolab* with Jad Abumrad, NPR's *Weekend Edition*, NPR Music's *Tiny Desk Concerts*, *New Sounds* with John Schaefer, and elsewhere.

Rooted in the belief that music is an elemental form of human communication and galvanized by forces for social change in recent years, Sō Percussion enthusiastically pursues a growing range of social and community outreach through their nonprofit organization. Their Brooklyn Bound concert series, now in its seventh year, provides a platform for artists from our growing community. The Sō Percussion Summer Institute, which just completed its thirteenth year, is an intensive two-week chamber music seminar for percussionists and composers. SōSI features community performances, new work development, guest artist workshops, and an annual food-packing drive, yielding 25,000 meals per year for the Crisis Center of Mercer County through the organization



End Hunger NE. Sō Percussion has also devoted itself to a range of programs that advance goals and projects in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. These efforts include a studio residency program in Brooklyn; partnerships with other local music organizations, such as Pan in Motion; the donation of proceeds from album sales to Black-led organizations, including Castle of our Skins; fiscal sponsorship; and inclusive programming.

Our thanks to MSU College of Music musicians who participated in this performance.

Shenny Chiou  
Maura Drinkert  
Trevor Else  
Noah Ende  
Elyor Gafurov  
Michael Giunta  
Angel Hernandez  
Lacy Jewell  
Benjamin Kessler  
Blake Koschmider  
Catherine Lee  
Noah Mallett

Benjamin Mapes  
James McPheron  
Evan Moore  
Doug Nanzer  
Lorena Navarro  
Eric Saroian  
Peyton Stramel  
Ally Szeles  
Jacob Valentino  
Rachel Vondra  
Erin Widman  
Kayla Yingling

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- The National Endowment for the Arts
- The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature
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- The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation
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- The Howard Gilman Foundation
- The Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation
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Sō Percussion uses Vic Firth sticks, Zildjian cymbals, Remo drumheads, Estey Organs, and Pearl/Adams instruments.

Sō Percussion would like to thank these companies for their generous support and donations.



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