

# LIVENESS

A CELLO RECITAL BY JENNIFER BEWERSE  
JANUARY 28, 2014 - 8:00PM

Standing Waves	Jennifer Bewerse
Burn Again with a Low Blue Flame (2011)	Annie Gosfield
Vessel* (2014)	Caroline Miller

*Brief Pause*

Durations 2 (1960)	Morton Feldman
The New Right of Spring (1977) <i>Bourée I &amp; II by Johann Sebastian Bach</i>	Pauline Oliveros
Charles Curtis (2002)	Alvin Lucier

*\*indicates world premiere*

As musical access evolves alongside technology and ever-shifting culture, the performing artist is confronted with a question: is live performance essential? Tonight's concert offers six pieces and their various answers to this question.

Exploring how sound exists in a space – how it defines and is defined by a space, and how it's observed in that space - the full realization of these works is only available in the moments they are exchanged between the performer and audience.

A case for live performance is made not with the risk for failure or presentation of the performer as hero, but with compositional ideas that live fully only within the moment of performance.

### **Standing Waves**

Standing Waves are created by the reflection and interference of sound waves – in this case, of two sine waves emanating from the speakers on stage. The resulting field of nodes and antinodes – manifested as areas of varying volume – is unique to the shape of this concert hall. Though dictated by the shape of the room, the experience of these sounds is completely controlled by the listener as they move throughout the space. The result is a physical demonstration of listening and an invitation to experience the whole of our shared space throughout this concert.

### ***Burn Again with a Low Blue Flame* by Annie Gosfield**

“Burn Again with a Low Blue Flame is a work that is to be played twice: once as a simple tape piece, and then again as a piece for cello and electronics. The recorded element of the piece is identical, but the cellist becomes the focus for the second version, in a fully notated part that in turn blends, contrasts, and stands out from a recorded orchestra of strings, winds, and mechanical sounds.” – Annie Gosfield

The beauty of this piece is in the manipulation of sound origination. By juxtaposing the two halves of *Burn Again*, Gosfield highlights the effects of present and absent sound sources. In relief against the unchanging

electronics, the live sound source becomes a demonstration of autonomy where live sound pushes against, recedes behind, and overcomes electronics. The result provides a musical environment where the listener's focus is guided through and can selectively move amid the sound locations.

### ***Vessel* by Caroline Miller**

Commissioned for this concert, *Vessel* is embedded with unpredictability, where the sound created is exclusive to each performance.

"This piece is supposed to be sort of like a living creature. It is not fully itself on the page (the page is just potential, like a recipe or DNA), just as it is not itself when on a recording (a recording is a deterministic destruction of this potential). Just like a living organism, the piece is a product of both its genetics and its environment." – Caroline Miller

Through expressions of unstable sound objects and indeterminate pacing, *Vessel* seeks to reveal unexpected sound artifacts, new possibilities, and delicate surprises. Beyond the natural differences of performing any piece of music, Miller creates a sound world that is, in its essence, temporary.

### ***Durations II* by Morton Feldman**

*Durations II* is one of five Duration works composed by Morton Feldman between February 1960 and May 1961. "Duration is indeed the topic of the Durations, but what is meant here is not the composition of time values but the removal of the tone lengths from the composer's controlling grasp" (Peter Niklas Wilson).

Thus, each performance of *Durations II* is necessarily unique as each instrument moves along its individual path dictated by the performers' durational decisions. Feldman encouraged performers to avoid what he called "the sound of linear counterpoint" and would guide performers by describing the sounds as sourceless. According to John Tilbury, "he wanted them to take on that precious quality of transience, of uncatchability ... to be free but not arbitrary, elusive but compelling."

*Durations II* lives as a procession of decisions, dependent on a host of immeasurable conditions unique to the performance's individual time and space that kaleidoscopically circulate Feldman's pitches. While this performance can be captured, it is only as a memory dislocated from the time and space that initiated its creation.

### ***The New Right of Spring* by Pauline Oliveros**

*The New Right of Spring* is one of many Sonic Meditations composed by Pauline Oliveros as part of her exploration of Deep Listening. As described by the Deep Listening Institute founded by Oliveros, Deep Listening "explores the difference between the involuntary nature of hearing and the voluntary, selective nature - exclusive and inclusive - of listening."

Referencing the famous musical depiction of a primitive sacrificial dance by Igor Stravinsky, Oliveros's *The New Right of Spring* instructs the performer to "play any piece but give up middle C." These whimsical instructions create the conditions for a performance that encourages Deep Listening by subverting listener expectations of a familiar piece. Instead of listening to, in this case, *Bourées* by Bach, the listener is tracking and imaging an absent pitch, experiencing absence and its implications.

"One of the values of Deep Listening is folly, the way it leads us to listen with abandon, to transcend the deafness of cultural conditioning. It moves us beyond such constructs as "logical" discourse, rationality, and traditional music." - William Osborne

This listening experience hinges on imagined sound and playful disorientation, the bizarre experience of hearing something familiar for the first time. But, subverted expectations give way to predictability upon multiple listenings, so that the first hearing of a version of *The New Right of Spring* offers the most potent opportunity for the listener to focus on their auditory environment and the cognitive processes that influence their experience of it.

## *Charles Curtis* by Alvin Lucier

At the crux of Alvin Lucier's *Charles Curtis* is the creation of acoustic beating that occurs when two or more different frequencies are sounded. The musical material of *Charles Curtis* consists of two sliding sine waves and one cellist playing two simultaneous pitches. The resulting beats – constructive and destructive oscillations in volume when vibrations in the air collide – only exist as a result of the interactions between these independent sound sources in space, not within the sources of the sounds, but, as Nicolas Collins describes it, “beyond the loudspeaker.”

Thus, both the performer and listener must reorient their conception of sound. In the words of Charles Curtis himself “the sound of this music is not a signal being broadcast but a field being activated where frequency manifests itself as wavelength as much as pitch.” The performance occurs through the assertion of the cellist's sound into the body of air already filled by the sine waves' vibrations. These assertions are dictated by the consequent beating they produce, thus the performer is not interpreting her part, but the total sound of the piece – a dynamic body of air filling the concert space.

Cellist **Jennifer Bewerse** is a devoted champion of the music of our generation and regularly works with emerging young composers. As a result of her collaborations, she has premiered over fifty works including Daniel Frantz's *Sech Kleine Tanze* (2008), Mischa Salkind-Pearl's *In the Morning Light Gathered at My Window* (2010), and Jay Mikelman's *It rains when you're here and it rains when you're gone* (2013) for solo cello. Other composers she has had the privilege to work with include Augusta Read Thomas, Patricia Alessandrini, Christian Wolff, Chaya Czernowin, Gunther Schuller, Jonathan Harvey, and David Del Tredici.

She has also participated in Sound Encounters, SICPP, Oregon Bach Festival: Composer's Symposium, and Music from Salem: the Cello Seminar modern music festivals, the Banff Centre Chamber Music Residency, as a guest soloist for the Robert Helps Festival and International Composition Competition, and was the 2010 Performance Prizewinner at the soundSCAPE festival in Italy.

Jennifer is an enthusiastic chamber musician and is currently the cellist of Diagenesis Duo with vocalist Heather Barnes and of San Diego's Quartet Nouveau. She is also founding member of the Bricolage Quartet, formerly in residence as the Boston Conservatory Honors String Quartet. A native of Florida, Jennifer received her Bachelors of Music magna cum laude from the University of South Florida and her Masters of Music from The Boston Conservatory. Currently, she is pursuing her Doctorate in Contemporary Performance at the University of California in San Diego with a full scholarship. Her principal teachers include Joan Markstein, Scott Kluksdahl, Rhonda Rider, and Charles Curtis.

For more information, visit [www.jenniferbewerse.com](http://www.jenniferbewerse.com).

*With Deepest Gratitude*

*Tim Clark, Charles Curtis, Jessica Flores,  
Caroline Miller, Steve Lewis, Antonio Estrada, Anthony Burr, Judith Hamann,  
Rachel Beetz, Dustin Donahue, Kyle Blair,  
Leah Bowden, and Rand Steiger*