

# CASSANDRA

### PROJECT

#### **ENSEMBLE FOR THESE TIMES**

Nanette McGuinness, Soprano Ilana Blumberg, Violin Abigail Monroe, Cello Margaret Halbig, Piano E4TT.org

Saturday, April 17, 2021 | 7:30 pm

#### Welcome to E4TT's annual commissions concert and our second virtual program in 2021, "The Cassandra Project: Women's Prophetic Voices."

At a time when it has become crystal clear how often women's voices are stifled and ignored—and how much they should be heeded—the mythical Greek prophetess Cassandra has seldom been more relevant. Which is why E4TT has chosen to base its 2021 commissions concert on her. Cassandra's most famous prophecy, the one that has echoed through the centuries, was her devastatingly accurate vision of the Fall of Troy. And although an accurate seer, she was cursed never to be believed, a curse that in many tellings of the myth, came from her refusing to yield to the god Apollo's desires.

Through the ages, Cassandra has become an archetype, a symbol of women's rebellion against patriarchal power and their warnings against war. Her visions were said to have driven her mad, and her fate after Troy fell was ugly.

Ancient history? Yes. Mythical? Certainly. Relevant and of these times? Definitely.

We're thrilled to have guests violinist llana Blumberg and cellist Abigail Monroe join us again for this program, which includes two new pieces with visuals, produced by David Garner and filmed by videographer MisterWa: a music video presentation of Garner's "Die geflüsterte Zukunft" (The Whispered Future); Jessica Rudman's "Cassandra, or Don't Girls Love Houses?" to images by Stephen Stokes, designed and projected by Brennan Stokes. Before the concert, we're honored to have Hannah Lash, Mary Kouyoumdjian, Valerie Liu, Jessica Rudman, Kendra Preston Leonard and David Garner join us via Zoom for a preconcert panel/Q&A. The concert will be streamed on YouTube; we hope you'll join us in the YouTube chat during the program and afterwards back on Zoom.

We're grateful that all the musicians were able to be vaccinated before recording this program. Our heartfelt gratitude to the San Francisco Arts Commission—without whose support we could not have brought you this program—as well as to the Ross McKee Foundation, the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, The Producer's Loft Studio, and to all of you, our wonderful fans and supporters.

Thank you for joining us online, stay safe, and be well!

#### PROGRAM

P - Margaret Halbig, Piano

**S** - Nanette McGuinness, Soprano **V** - Ilana Blumberg, Violin

Valerie Liu (b. 1971) Cassandra Effect (2020) C/P 9' Jessica Rudman Don't Girls Love Horses? (2020) \$/C/P 11' (b. 1982) Text by Kendra Preston Leonard (b. 1974) Hannah Lash (b. 1981) Wild Sage (2020) V/C/P 5' David Garner (b. 1954) Die geflüsterte Zukunft 9' (The Whispered Future, 2020) \$/V/C/P Moerae (The Fates) (2010) V/C/P 15' Mary Kouyoumdjian (b. 1983) i. Clotho [the spinner, who spins the thread of life] ii. Lachesis [the measurer, who chooses the lot of life] iii. Atropos [the cutter, who cannot be turned, who at death with her shears cuts the thread of lifel

Producer (Rudman, Garner): David Garner

Videographer: Mister WA

C - Abigail Monroe, Cello

Video (Garner): "Helen of Troy," directed by Manfred Noa (German, 1924)

Visual Artist (Rudman): Stephen Stokes Projectionist (Rudman): Brennan Stokes Makeup Artist (Garner): Brennan Stokes

Texts for *Die geflüsterte Zukunft*: Stanzas VI, VII and VIII from "Kassandra" by Friedrich Schiller with various spoken English and German quotes from Nostradamus, Revelations, Edgar Cayce, Nizar Qabbani, Fátima, Aeschylus, Thucydides, Shakespeare, Wilhelm Friess, and Hildegard von Bingen.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Girls Love Horses" © 2020 by Kendra Preston Leonard. Used with permission.

#### TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

#### Kassandra VI, VII and IIX by Friedrich Schiller

Und sie schelten meine Klagen, Und sie höhnen meinen Schmerz, Einsam in die Wüste tragen Muß ich mein gequältes Herz, Von den Glücklichen gemieden Und den Fröhlichen ein Spott! Schweres hast du mir beschieden, Pythischer, du arger Gott!

Dein Orakel zu verkünden, Warum warfest du mich hin In die Stadt der ewig Blinden Mit dem aufgeschloßnen Sinn? Warum gabst du mir zu sehen, Was ich doch nicht wenden kann? Das Verhängte muß geschehen, Das Gefürchtete muß nahn.

Frommts, den Schleier aufzuheben, Wo das nahe Schrecknis droht? Nur der Irrtum ist das Leben, Und das Wissen ist der Tod. Nimm, o nimm die traurge Klarheit, Mir vom Aug den blutgen Schein, Schrecklich ist es, deiner Wahrheit Sterbliches Gefäß zu sein.

#### Cassandra VI, VII, and IIX Translation by David Garner

And they rebuke my complaints
And they mock my pain,
Alone in the wasteland
must I carry my tormented heart,
Shunned by the fortunate
And a mockery to the happy!
You have chosen to burden me,
Apollo, you wrathful God!

To proclaim your oracle,
Why did you cast me here
In the city of the eternally blind
With my senses exposed?
Why did you give me to see
What I certainly cannot change?
What is fated must happen.
What is feared must approach.

Is it righteous to lift the veil
Where the advancing horror threatens?
Life is only a mistake,
And death knowledge.
Take, oh take the tragic clarity,
The bloody shine from my eyes,
It is terrible to be the
Mortal vessel of your truth.

#### Don't Girls Love Horses? by Kendra Preston Leonard

I was a girl in Troy, and like so many girls, I loved horses.

A pony from Thessaly
was my darling,
and the one who had a star on her nose;
and the one I rode
the day before I was cursed
was gentle and swift on the plains.

When I was a girl
I rode on the horses
that the King my father owned.
They were meant for racing
and acrobatics in the hippodrome, but
I rode my horses away
from the men and their spears,
and their catalogues of ships.

And for the days when the wind from the sea was cold
I stayed in the stables
where I brushed all the horses
and I braided their manes.
I stayed with the horses.
I stayed.

I was a girl in Troy, and like so many girls,
I loved horses.

Now I am my city's
most famous
mad
woman, and
I love horses—

But that beautiful mountainous wooden horse

I can see right now, outside our gates—

Friends,

I do not love that horse.

I have warned you and warned you, but you think my dreams are those of a girl, just a girl who loves horses.

Please listen, please hear: I have seen horses in my dreams where I dream of smoke and fire

and that is the horse that I saw in my sleep when I dreamed

of the fall of Troy.

Didn't I tell you? You called me mad you said what is wrong with you don't girls love horses?

This wooden horse brings men who reek of heat and flesh and the spears I have long avoided; this horse is a ship for land and siege, that races in funeral games. This horse will not run with me down to the bay in the fresh spring grass, around the track or out through the gate;

this horse is not a horse for escaping.

I saw this horse and its fir-tree flanks and its body covered with skins; oh I foresaw it, I foretold it,

and you laughed—and you said

you are mad don't girls love horses?

This horse, why a horse, oh for Troy loves its horses, but my friends this horse has no teeth but swords and this horse will eat our hearts as we run run, run.

Heed me now, mark this danger.
Do not let us stable this horse, say
the stables are full, send it away;
it will kick and bite and throw us
under
its giant rolling hooves;

no foals rest within its womb but a host of men all armed

and there in the heights is the priest felled by the altar where now the bull runs free, the priest with serpents knotted at his arms as he shouts—
as I have said—
don't trust the horse

do not do not trust the horse.

Trojans, if you love your horses now, ride away from this one; bring me my mare sure-footed and blazed—

no, no—give her to this girl by my side, this girl, this girl who loves horses, so that she can flee.

I will not escape:

I have dreamt that too, in a wretched curl of sleep.

Let me tell you once more, I beg you to believe me:

In the dark body of the wooden horse, in the belly of this mighty horse we will find the men I have seen: forty men there and two in its eyes

bringing no gift

but death and fate

death and fate and death and fate and death:

and fate and fate.

Yet you keep asking don't girls love horses?

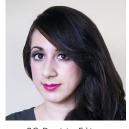
#### ABOUT THE COMPOSERS



P.C. Frogsong Photography

E4TT composer and founding member DAVID GARNER (b. 1954) won The American Prize in 2015 for his String Quartet No. 2. Garner's music has been reviewed as "alluring" and "a heady and touching revelation," and his works have been performed nationally and internationally by artists such as Suzanne Mentzner, Catherine Cook, Crystal

Philippi, David Krakauer, and Matt Haimowitz. Garner's opera, "Mary Pleasant at Land's End," is in the final stages of pre-production. A faculty member in composition, chamber music, music theory and literature at the SF Conservatory of Music, Garner is a member of BMI, American Composers Forum, and the American Music Center.



P.C. Dominica Erkisen

MARY KOUYOUMDJIAN is a composer with projects ranging from concert works to multimedia collaborations and film scores. As a first generation Armenian-American and having come from a family directly affected by the Lebanese Civil War and Armenian Genocide, she uses a sonic palette that draws on her heritage, interest in music as

documentary, and background in experimental composition to progressively blend the old with the new. She has received commissions from such organizations as the Kronos Quartet, New York Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alarm Will Sound, Roomful of Teeth, OPERA America, Beth Morrison Projects, and American Composers Forum. Kouyoumdjian is a cofounder of the annual new music conference New Music Gathering and is proud to have her music published on Schott's PSNY.



HANNAH LASH's music has been performed at Carnegie Hall, Los Angeles Walt Disney Concert Hall, Lincoln Center, the Times Center in Manhattan, the Chicago Art Institute, Tanglewood Music Center, The Aspen Music Festival & School, among others. In 2016, Lash was honored with a Composer Portrait Concert at Columbia University's Miller Theatre, which included commissioned works for pianist Lisa Moore and loadbang. In the 2017-2018 season, Lash's *Piano Concerto No. 1* "In Pursuit of Flying" was premiered by Jeremy Denk and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra; the Atlantic Classical Orchestra debuted Facets of Motion for orchestra, and Music for Nine, Ringing was performed at the Music Academy of the West School and Festival. Last season, Paul Appleby and Natalia premiered Songs of Imagined Love, a song cycle commissioned by Carnegie Hall and Lash's chamber opera, Desire, premiered at Miller Theatre to great acclaim. Hannah Lash's Concerto for piano and harp was premiered in November by the Naples Philharmonic. Most recently, Hub New Music premiered Lash's The Nature of Breaking. Hannah Lash's music is published exclusively by Schott Music Corporation (New York).



KENDRA PRESTON LEONARD is a poet, lyricist, and librettist whose work is inspired by the local, historical, and mythopoeic. Her texts have been set by composers including Lisa Neher, Jessica Rudman, and Stephen Vincent Casellas, and performed by the Choral Arts Initiative and Hartford Opera Theater, among others. Her

chapbook *Making Mythology* was published in 2020 by Louisiana Literature Press, and her novella in verse, *Protectress*, will be published in 2021 by Unsolicited Press. Individual poems appear in numerous publications including *vox poetica*, *lunch*, and *About Place*. Leonard is also a scholar whose work focuses on women and music in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; and music and screen history.



A semifinalist for The American Prize in Chamber Music in 2020, Alameda resident **VALERIE LIU** received the 2019 Ruth Crawford Seeger Award from the Alba Foundation. Drawing from an eclectic range of influence, her compositions are inspired by her strong connection to the natural world, art work, and ancient cultures. As a

composer, pianist and educator, Ms. Liu has been guided by valuable

experiences gained from her mentor Henry Jen. A San Francisco Conservatory graduate, Liu received special mention at the Maurice Ravel International Composition Competition and honorable mention at the IAWM New Music Competition. Before focusing on composing Liu enjoyed a decade-long career as a clinical nurse, but she eventually decided to pursue her passion for music composition formally and left nursing. She manages a successful private teaching studio, working with children of all ages, and regularly brings music to rehab centers and skilled nursing facilities.



JESSICA RUDMAN's music inspires empathy for contemporary social issues through myth, magic, and sci-fi. Described as a "new music ninja" (Hartford Advocate), she blends lyrical melodies and dramatic narratives with sensual harmony and vibrant color to draw the audience into the worlds she creates. Her works have been performed by the Arditti Quartet, the International Contemporary Ensemble, Hartford Opera Theater,

and others. Honors include winning the Riot Ensemble's Commissioning Competition, the NewMusic@ECU Orchestra Composition Competition, and a 2019 Connecticut Artist Fellowship. Rudman holds degrees from the University of Virginia, The Hartt School, and the CUNY Graduate Center.

#### ABOUT ENSEMBLE FOR THESE TIMES

Awarded second place in 2019 for Chamber Music Performance by The American Prize and 2019 Finalists for the Ernest Bacon Memorial Award for the Performance of American Music, E4TT consists of award-winning soprano and Artistic Executive Director Nanette McGuinness, cellist Anne Lerner, season guest pianist Margaret Halbig, and Artistic Advisor and 2015 American Prize-winning composer David Garner. The group focuses on 20th and 21st century music that is relevant, engaging, original and compelling—music that resonates with today and speaks to tomorrow, that harnesses the power of artistic beauty, intelligence, wit, lyricism, and irony to create a deep understanding of our times and the human condition. E4TT performed at the 2016 Krakow Culture Festival, at the Conservatorio Teresa Berganza in Madrid in 2017, was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Budapest in 2014 for a four-city tour in Hungary, and made its international debut in Berlin. E4TT has performed locally at the German Consulate General, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Old First Concerts, JCC Peninsula, Trinity Chamber Concerts, and Noontime Concerts, among other venues, and has commissioned 25 works and two arrangements.

E4TT's critically acclaimed debut CD, Surviving: Women's Words (Centaur, 2016) won a Silver Medal in the 2016 Global Music Award and was reviewed as "fascinating," "passionate," "deeply moving" and "compelling." Lesley Mitchell Clarke (The Whole Note) wrote, "Now more than ever, as the U.S. experiences a déjà vu of hatred and is poised on the brink of societal unravelling, the potent and timeless messages of survival, love, tolerance and forgiveness contained on this brilliant presentation need to resonate throughout the world." The group's second CD, The Hungarians: From Rózsa to Justus (Centaur, 2018) won a Gold Medal in the 2018 Global Music Awards. E4TT released its third CD, Once/Memory/Night: Paul Celan, in June 2020; the recording won a Silver Medal in the Global Music Awards and was chosen as the Center for New Music's Album of the Week for the week of July 17. In choosing it, curator Kurt Rohde wrote, "The members of Ensemble For These Times are longstanding, expert champions of forgotten work by those nearly lost to history, as well as bringing up new voices who have meaningful new work to share. Their newest recording is further evidence of this mission." The CD was reviewed as "gripping," and "constantly stimulating and engaging" (Textura.org) as "skillful," "moving," "chilling," and "effective (Jason Victor Serenius, well as SFCV.org). Raul Da Gama (The Whole Note) called the CD "breathtaking" and "extraordinary," writing that "This recording features almost an hour of poetry echoing with heart-aching emotion delivered in a kind of near-spiritual guietude."

#### ABOUT THE PERFORMERS



Violinist **ILANA BLUMBERG** has appeared across the United States and internationally, in solo appearances with the San Francisco Symphony, the Albany Symphony (NY), Symphony Napa Valley, and the Merced Symphony, as well as performances at the prestigious Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, the Marlboro Music Festival, the La Jolla Summerfest as a 'Rising Star', the Aspen Music

Festival, and many others. She appears frequently throughout the Bay Area with the Marin, Silicon Valley, West Edge Opera, Berkeley, and California Symphonies, as well as with the Golden Gate String Quartet, eco ensemble, and Left Coast Chamber Ensemble.



Season guest pianist **MARGARET HALBIG** is in high demand as a collaborative artist in both the instrumental and vocal fields. On staff at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music since 2011, she regularly performs recitals, masterclasses, and lessons and has collaborated with many of esteemed Bay Area musicians including mezzo-soprano Frederica Von Stade, San

Francisco Symphony Principal Trombonist Timothy Higgins, and SF Symphony's principal tubist Jeffrey Anderson. An advocate of new and contemporary music, Halbig is the pianist for Ninth Planet, a San Francisco-based new music collective and a member of the wind-and-piano sextet Frequency 49. Halbig was a Collaborative Teaching fellow at Interlochen Arts in 2017 and 2018 in both collaborative and solo piano and has been the pianist for Young Women's Chorus of San Francisco since 2014.

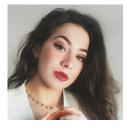


P.C. Russ Fischella

Soprano and E4TT co-founder, and Artistic Executive Director **NANETTE MCGUINNESS** has performed in 12 languages on two continents in over 25 roles with the Silesian State (Czech Republic), Opera San Jose (Opera in the Schools), West Bay Opera, Pacific Repertory Opera, Trinity Lyric Opera, and Livermore Valley Opera, among others. Solo concert engagements include Mahler's

Fourth Symphony, as well as Shéhérézade (Ravel), Nuits d'étés (Berlioz), Stabat

Mater (Rossini), Requiem (Fauré), Gloria (Vivaldi), Lord Nelson Mass (Haydn), Vesperae Solennes (Mozart), and Handel's Messiah and Solomon. Her CD of music by 19th and 20th century women composers, Fabulous Femmes (Centaur)—which was called "perfect for the song recital lover" by Chamber Music Magazine—features several premiere recordings.



ABIGAIL MONROE is a New Mexico based performer and educator. She holds a Bachelor's degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in cello performance under the instruction of Jennifer Culp. She has appeared as a soloist, chamber musician, and large ensemble musician in venues across the United States. As a San Francisco resident, Abigail performs frequently

throughout the Bay Area as both a classical cellist. She has served as both Principal cellist of the SFCM Orchestra, as well as the Miami Summer Music Festival Symphony Orchestra. As the winner of the Jackie McGehee Young Artists Competition in 2019, Abigail was also featured as cello soloist performing Elgar's Cello Concerto with the New Mexico Philharmonic.

#### SEASON CLOSER: SATURDAY, JUNE 12 AT 7:30 PM

The finale to E4TT's multi-year "Emigres & Exiles in Hollywood" series, which, due to COVID, we will bring to the 2022 Krakow Culture Festival for a return appearance in 2022 rather than 2021.

#### **E4TT Staff**

Nanette McGuinness, Artistic Executive Director Stephanie Neumann, Special Projects Assistant Brennan Stokes, Design & Marketing Assistant Jenny Ma, Intern

#### **Advisory Council**

David Garner, Senior Artistic Advisor Elinor Armer Kathy Barr Jeffrey Hoover Alden Jenks Kurt Rohde Frederica von Stade Cynthia Whitehead **Thank you** to our 2020 and 2021 individual donors and foundations for supporting us in performing relevant, timely, rare, contemporary music—such as today's concert.

#### Time Lord (\$1,000+)

Anonymous

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#### Time Master (\$500+)

Anonymous

Donna Cooper

Nicole Paiement and Brian Staufenbiel

Jane Randolph

#### Time Traveler (\$250-499)

James and Carole McGuinness

Nancy Quinn

#### Contemporary (\$100-249)

Robert Berkowitz, in memory of Lajos Delej

Katherine Bukstein

Elizabeth Davis and Carl Eggers

Dennis Estis

Juliana Hall

Summer Hirtzel

Lisa Jasper

Thomas Rike

Karen Rosenak

Michael Schuler

Kabir Sehgal

Cherrill Spencer

Susan Swerdlow

Kathleen Krull Urban

Cynthia Whitehead

#### Timekeeper (\$50-99)

Elinor Armer

Jacqueline Divenyi

Margret Elson

Paula and Eric Gillett

Allen Greene

Ellen Hahn

Lawrence Kramer and Nancy Leonard

Will Shenton

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E4TT is honored to be fiscally sponsored by <u>InterMusic SF</u>, a non-profit organization dedicated to small-ensemble music in the San Francisco Bay Area. List current as of March 20, 2021.

## DON'T MISS OUR LAST CONCERT OF THE SEASON!



JUNE 12, 2021 | 7:30 P.M.