



TUESDAYS @ MONK SPACE

presented by

Brightwork
newmusic

TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2025 8PM

SOLO DUOS

O Euchari

Hildegard/trans. Richman

He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven

Christian Carey

in manus tuas

Caroline Shaw

Cricket-Viol

Arlene Sierra

Cave Point

Wendy Richman

Song for Sendai

Ken Ueno

WENDY RICHMAN, VIOLA





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SOLO DUOS

Running Spring

Elegia Universalis

Interlude I

In the Company of Thoughts

Interlude II

(with Nick Norton)

Antibodypolitic

Ever Ending

ALEXANDER ELLIOTT MILLER
COMPOSER & GUITAR

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ARTIST BIOS

Wendy Richman

Violist Wendy Richman has been celebrated for her compelling sound and “absorbing,” “fresh and idiomatic” interpretations with “a brawny vitality” (The New York Times, The Washington Post). As soloist and chamber musician, she has performed at major venues across the U.S. and around the world. She is a founding member of the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE).



Wendy collaborates with a wide range of composers and has commissioned a body of work for singing violist. Her album of these works, *vox/viola*, was released on New Focus Recordings in 2020. She frequently performs with Los Angeles Philharmonic and was previously a regular guest with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the orchestral viola sections of Atlanta, Minnesota, and St. Louis.

Wendy serves as Lecturer in Performance Studies at UCLA and Lecturer of Viola at Cal State Northridge (CSUN), and she has mentored hundreds of student composers through readings, residencies, recordings, and performances. She regularly offers classes on viola repertoire and technique, lectures on string notation, and workshops on contemporary string techniques.

Wendy holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory (BM), New England Conservatory (MM), and Eastman School of Music (DMA with Diploma in Ethnomusicology). Her teachers include Carol Rodland, Kim Kashkashian, Jeffrey Irvine, Peter Slowik, and Sara Harmelink; she was also mentored by Karen Ritscher and Roger Tapping. Wendy’s academic interests address musicians’ communities, stemming from her own experiences with composer-performer relationships, gender-based discrimination, and disability. Her compositions link her love of unconventional string sounds with reflections on nature, physical trauma, and invisible disability.

Recent and upcoming seasons’ highlights include performances of Mozart’s *Sinfonia Concertante* with violinist Lorenz Gamma and the CSUN Symphony Orchestra at The Soraya in Los Angeles; *Harold in Italy* with conductor Christian Baldini and the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra at the Mondavi Center; and recital programs at Lawrence Conservatory, Oberlin Conservatory, UC Santa Barbara, and venues in Boston, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, New Orleans, and NYC.



ARTIST BIOS

Alexander Elliott Miller

Described by the LA Times as "deceptively laid back in an LA way...inventive... unconventional," Alexander Elliott Miller is a Southern California composer whose primary instrument is a Gibson Les Paul. Many of Miller's projects feature the electric guitar either accompanied by electronic music or in classical chamber ensembles.



His largest projects are *Antibodypolitic* and *To...Oblivion*; the former is an album of pandemic themed compositions for electric guitar and synthesizers described by Grammy winning guitarist and KPFK 90.7 Global Village host John Schneider as "power guitar;" the latter is an album of pieces inspired by six historic landmarks in Los Angeles of some social or symbolic significance, for electric guitar, sound effects and a video slideshow and then and now imagery.

Miller has also composed works with guitar for HOCKET, Duo Montagnard and his own duo with percussionist Ben Phelps. Other compositions have been performed by Grammy nominated artists including Vicki Ray, Tony Arnold and Aron Kallay, and in 2017 his work *Actions & Resonances* was performed at Carnegie Hall by pianist Vincent Craig. He teaches theory and composition at CSULB's Bob Cole Conservatory of Music, as well as theory and songwriting for Chapman University's Music Technology Minor. He lives in Long Beach with his girlfriend Christen and their dachshund, Nessie.



Antibodypolitic

Conceived in the early days of Covid 19, Antibodypolitic is an album of compositions by Alexander Elliott Miller for electric guitar and synthesizers, combining rock, electronic and modern classical influences in a collection of works inspired by the pandemic experience. "Running Spring" is a driven, determined work inspired by getting into running during the spring of 2020, a sort of adrenaline-fueled musical flight or fight reaction, "Elegia Universalis" is a lament not for the loss of any specific person but all of the loss experienced during the period. "In the Company of Thoughts" was composed during the "winter surge" of 2020 in isolation during the holidays.

The title track, "Antibodypolitic" was written shortly after vaccination in 2021, its title combining "antibody" and "body politic" aiming to express the same sentiment in the Estonian composer Arvo Part's quote "this tiny coronavirus has show us in a painful way that humanity is a single living organism and life is only possible in relation to other living beings." "Ever Ending" is a strongly rock influenced finale, not celebrating the "end" of the pandemic, but rather celebrating allowing oneself to escape its grip on day to day life. The performance of Antibodypolitic includes two final synth Interludes, which are played while tuning and pedal changes are made by the performer. Interlude II is a collaboration with composer Nick Norton.

Vox/Viola

Since finishing my bachelor's degree in 2001, I had inadvertently stopped singing with any regularity or seriousness: I no longer had weekly secondary voice lessons to keep me in some kind of vocal shape and make me feel that singing was still a significant part of my life. The few times I could remember singing in public were afterthoughts that concluded my viola recitals: a Schumann lied ("Der Nussbaum") on my Cleveland Institute of Music junior recital to honor my gravely ill grandmother; a Kurt Weill song ("I'm a Stranger Here Myself") on my Oberlin senior recital, replete with black feather boa; and Brahms's Zwei Gesänge, Op. 91, for alto voice, viola, and piano. (I've performed the voice and viola parts each several times, but never simultaneously—that's a party trick I don't feel a need to cultivate.) Every time I sang, I felt wistful: I had never trained intensively enough to feel like a "real singer," but I sang well enough that I knew I was capable of more. And, of particular significance, I also noticed how much stronger my viola playing was during periods

In 2005, I was living in Boston after finishing my master's degree at New England Conservatory. I had a part-time orchestra job and a part-time teaching job, both of which required so much driving that it was difficult to fully engage in the work. With the newish International Contemporary Ensemble, I traveled fairly often to New



Vox/Viola (cont.)

York City and Chicago for performances, and my aspiration was to perform contemporary and experimental music full-time. I was also playing regularly with pianist Stephen Drury's Boston-based Callithumpian Consort, through whom I fell into the mystical microtonal world of Giacinto Scelsi with pieces like the string trio and *Kya*.

I unearthed a purple-covered copy of Scelsi's *Manto* that I had special ordered via the CIM bookstore in 1999, when I was looking for oversized, thorny, expensive scores that I thought might make my classmates' heads explode. (My Ligeti *Sonata* and Berio *Sequenza* also date from that era, which my mom likes to call my Oberlin "junior year abroad" in Cleveland.) Thumbing through *Manto* for the first time in years, I was stunned to see the note at the top of the third part:

Manto III: pour une altiste/chanteuse

La violista canta anche lei. Questo testo è un discorso della Sibylla cioè un recitativo appena cantato.

The viola player (necessarily female) must also sing [sic]. This text is a speech of the Sibyl, in other words a barely sung recitative.

-Giacinto Scelsi, *Manto III*

A piece for female violist essentially singing in tongues? Guttural belting with a theatrical air? It hadn't been written for me, but surely I was a target performer. I eagerly began to study the piece, and Steve Drury suggested programming it on a Callithumpian show.

I began programming the piece on "traditional" recitals, programs on which I would normally have shied away from playing anything unconventional. What I found, though, was that the piece's uniqueness and my own commitment to the music translated to something to which even somewhat conservative audiences responded positively. I wish I could recall the first people who planted the seed about collaborating with composers to create pieces for singing violist, but I only remember that the idea was received with a lot of excitement when I mentioned it to friends and colleagues. The project began to really take shape when my husband and I moved to Ithaca, where I had the opportunity to take voice lessons with Judith Kellock. Judy's enthusiastic encouragement of the idea really pushed me to move forward with it.



Vox/Viola (cont.)

As I thought about composers who might be a good fit for the project, Ken Ueno was a natural choice: he was one of the first musicians whom I met in Boston and had become a close friend. He was already writing a viola concerto, *Talus*, for me to perform and record with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and the piece included some singing (and a well-placed scream). I had worked with Lou Bunk at my first gig in Boston, a chamber music concert featuring Brandeis graduate student composers. I greatly respected Lou and his written music; seeing him improvise on the Opensound series made me think that he was a beautiful fit for a slightly offbeat project. I had played and heard several pieces by José-Luis Hurtado when I played in the Harvard Group for New Music, a graduate student series he ran for several years. I was drawn to José-Luis's friendliness as a person and meticulousness as a composer. Steve Gorbos and I became friends through a Cornell connection (specifically, our now-spouses), and I loved the music of his that I had heard and played. He organized a 2011 concert at Strathmore Mansion in Washington, D.C., where I premiered the first version of his piece for me and performed most of the pieces on this album. In the early days of the International Contemporary Ensemble, David Smooke had written a delightfully quirky trio for two violas and toy piano that had sparked both our friendship and my interest in the way he integrated his rhythmic and microtonal languages. Jay Eckardt and I became friends soon after I finished undergrad, when he invited me to perform a Ferneyhough portrait concert with Ensemble21. We also collaborated several times through ICE, and I was always amazed by his combination of attention to detail, remarkable ears, and absolute clarity of musical vision.

Also at the time, I was very active on the social media platform Twitter, through which I met and became friends with Everette Minchew and Arlene Sierra. Everette's voracious appetite for listening to new music and meeting new musicians was infectious, and he was hilarious and easy to talk to. I knew just from talking with him that his music would be up my alley. Arlene struck me as brilliant and curious—when I listened to her work, I was immediately drawn to the unique textures and colors in her music. Christian Carey and I had met through Ken years earlier and developed a rapport through social media that was quite special. I greatly appreciated and respected that he seemed to approach compositions very differently depending on the performers and the instruments, while still maintaining a personal voice. These relationships were the initial inspiration for my doctoral thesis, *Ether, Paper, Player: Composer-Performer Collaboration in 21st-Century String Writing*.



PROGRAM NOTES

Vox/Viola (cont.)

In planning the project, I cared a great deal about working with friends and colleagues whose music I liked, rather than prioritizing someone's musical language. Of course, I greatly respect and believe in each of the unique voices on this album—but the variety among those voices is striking. The works might not have been so varied had I gravitated to composers whose music immediately felt like “me.” Some of them surprised me by coming back with music that was entirely different from what I had expected to receive, like Ken's use of tonality and Biber's Passacaglia in Song for Sendai. I am immensely grateful that each of these nine composers has pushed my playing and singing to places I might not have seen myself. Their work reminds me that musical taste need not be about fitting into a preconceived mold: it only has to be about what one responds to and loves.