

ALARM WILL SOUND WITH BORA YOON AND SERPENTWITHFEET AMERICAN STORIES

NARRATOR, VOCALS Bora Yoon
NARRATOR, VOCALS serpentwithfeet

ALARM WILL SOUND
CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Alan Pierson

FLUTES Erin Lesser
OBOE AND ENGLISH HORN Hassan Anderson
CLARINET Bill Kalinkos, Elisabeth Stimpert
BASSOON Michael Harley
HORN Nicolee Kuester
TRUMPET Tim Leopold
TROMBONES Michael Clayville
PERCUSSION Chris P. Thompson, Matt Smallcomb, Jared Soldiviero
PIANO John Orfe
VIOLIN Courtney Orlando, Lauren Cauley
VIOLA Gillian Gallagher
CELLO Stefan Freund
CONTRABASS AND ELECTRIC BASS Miles Brown

AUDIO ENGINEER Daniel Neumann
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Gavin Chuck
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ARTISTIC PLANNING Peter Ferry
PRODUCTION MANAGER Jason Varvaro
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER Tracy Mendez
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING Michael Clayville
LIBRARIAN Bill Kalinkos
OPERATIONS MANAGER Uday Singh

Zellerbach Theatre
Friday, March 13 @ 7:30 PM

There will be an intermission.

PROGRAM

<i>Hanabi (in-ear extended mix)</i> (2023)	Chris P. Thompson arr. Miles Brown and Thompson
<i>Vermilion Glare</i> (2023)	Elijah Daniel Smith
<i>Hasta que no pueda</i> (2023)	Christian Quiñones
<i>Casual Miracles</i> (2019)	Bora Yoon
"Invisible Knots"	
"Day of the Dead"	
"Soul Lottery"	
"Two Wolves (a parable)"	
"Three Ways to Look at the Ocean"	

INTERMISSION

<i>Stay On It</i> (1973)	Julius Eastman arr. Tim Leopold
<i>invoice</i> (2026, arrangement world premiere)	serpentwithfeet, arr. Shelley Washington

PROGRAM NOTES

Chris P. Thompson (b. 1978) on *Hanabi*

The original *Hanabi* was a short piece of electronic music wherein I played with the similarities between the bulletproof Kevlar articulation of marching percussion and the pops and sizzles of a fireworks show; hanabi 花火 is Japanese for fireworks.

This was the first time I ever incorporated the sound of metronomes into my music (a creative delight that has proven endlessly fruitful to this day). I wanted to create a subtle transition: from the organized structure of metronomic time to the chaotic entropy of random explosions.

After that track was released, I transcribed the marching tenors, drums and bass, with an eye to turning it into something that could be played live. This extended version of *Hanabi* turned out interestingly different enough that I actually recorded it and included it on my next album as *Hanabi (in-ear extended mix)*. If Aphex Twin could remix himself, I figured I could too.

Eventually, *Hanabi (in-ear extended mix)* entered the ears of one Miles Brown, and next thing I knew, a full arrangement for Alarm Will Sound was born, bringing marching tenors to the side with friends and metronomes.

Elijah Daniel Smith (b.1995) on *Vermilion Glare*

Vermilion Glare

Vermilion Glare aims to capture the feeling of straining to visually focus on what's in front of you when the setting sun is shining directly into your eyes.

Christian Quiñones (b. 1996) on *Hasta que no pueda*

One of my most constant fears in life is reaching the day when my mother can't hear me or listen to music. She has congenital hearing loss, and I still clearly remember the day when as a kid I understood what that meant. The terrifying thought of her one day not being able to understand me or being able to enjoy music has always been a persistent but seemingly distant dread, but one that has become more imminent recently. The past year, we received the news that her hearing loss reached fifty percent in one ear. After that moment, even in the most mundane situations in life, I often think about "how would my mom listen to this?" with the help of a website that simulates the effect of different types of hearing loss, this piece strives to answer that question. The piece takes short samples of many songs that I didn't necessarily like, but that my mom used to listen to a lot when we were growing up and reimagines them through a filtered and maximalist lens. Sonically, the piece slowly morphs from a muted and dark soundscape into a brightly colored and vibrant texture that mirrors my mother's congenital chronic condition.

Bora Yoon (b. 1980) on *Casual Miracles*

Casual Miracles is a narrated chamber cycle honoring the divine feminine—tracing the intersection and entanglements between life, death and birth. Scored for chamber orchestra, narrator/vocalist and audio playback, this work fuses hybrid timbres of Western classical to Korean traditional consort sounds, electronics, narration, sound design of the ocean and visuals to tell the story through multimedia, vignettes and song.

This song cycle articulates the invisibility of female labor—it is a meditation on the casual miracle women produce daily and globally—birthing life into the world. How to live that life, navigate, grow a sense of compass and zoom out to see the larger ocean of it all. How elements in that ocean are seemingly connected with invisible knots. How the randomness of the way that souls are passed out might look up in heaven, in a lottery of how spirits are given to physical bodies and family configurations. How the traffic of souls may look up in heaven, with souls entering and leaving. How the rituals honoring those departed on the Day of the Dead and saints entering heaven hearken to this idea of everything culminating in a larger ring cycle of life, birth and death, like a snake biting its tail, in a larger spinning wheel of mythology.

This cycle is a reclaiming of agency in response to a society that oppresses women, despite the fact women made all humans on this planet. This cycle states a case for a matriarchal society which does not rule over men in hierarchy as the patriarchy does — but centers children, well-being and wisdom. *Casual Miracles* is part of a larger developing radio play entitled *DENTATA*, a feminist rage aria song cycle that grapples with the extreme archetypes and paradoxical expectations of being a female in today's society.

Additional credits:

All words and music by Bora Yoon, except:

"Spinning Wheel" is a Korean traditional folk song quoted at the end of the second movement.

"Two Wolves" is a paraphrase of a Native American parable.

Electronics in the fourth movement created by Yoon and Ben Frost (Journal of Popular Noise, 2008, Bedroom Community).

Moving images in the fifth movement provided by the artist.

Image before the third movement resembling a telephone rotary is a dilation board.

Tim Leopold on *Stay On It* by Julius Eastman (1940-1990)

Arguably Julius Eastman's most iconic composition, *Stay On It* premiered in 1973 during his residency as a Creative Associate at the Center of the Creative Arts in Buffalo, New York. *Stay On It* is a post-minimal, structured improvisation for any combination of instruments, drawing on musical influences from minimalism, free jazz, pop, Caribbean, disco and Latin, among others. Its dramatic trajectory progresses loosely from mechanized inflexibility and collective riotousness to individual expressivity, mirroring the social, political and musical unrest of our time.

Serpentwithfeet on *invoice*

invoice, released in 2018 as part of serpentwithfeet's debut album *soil*, is co-written and co-produced by serpentwithfeet and Paul Epworth. Lyrics are by serpentwithfeet. Shelley Washington arranged *invoice* for Alarm Will Sound.

The song opens with an admission of the heart. Through the sinuous course of this anthemic number, serpent honors the men who expanded his capacity for love.

PROGRAM TEXTS

Hanabi (in-ear extended mix) | Thompson arr. Brown and Thompson

Vermilion Glare | Smith

Hasta que no pueda | Quiñones

Casual Miracles | Yoon

I. "Invisible Knots"

The world is held together
by invisible knots

II. "Day of the Dead"

And there we were, walking around Garfield Park
in San Francisco -
the clementines and marigolds, on altars to the
dead, at the foot of the sheltering trees,
and the adults gathered around, whispering
prayers.
When I notice a pinwheel of children, in the nearby
playground,
screaming, and careening on a carousel --
hanging on and squealing for dear life -

dear Life -
indeed.

Almost as tho they were the other ends of the turn
from the saints of the dead to the souls of the living.
The snake biting its tail — shedding and emerging,
Like the whorl of hair on baby's hair,
the carousel of sound
from saints to souls
whirling and whorling
and whorling into new form.

물레야, 물레야 — 빙글빙글 돌아가...
[Round and round, the spinning wheel turns..]

III. Soul Lottery

I always wondered what it looked like up there in
heaven, the day God passes out souls.
How she decides who goes to what family.
as if there could be interviews..
personality matches..
or whether it just is a random lottery of souls.. of
who goes where..

Souls recently died getting checked in, new souls
lined up to get distributed.
Or maybe it's some zany lotto ball where they fly
around, and get plucked like a ping pong
ball from the air, and says..
you.. * go w/ them! you...* over there -
.. (wait).. not too many rainbows in one place -
we have to spread you guys around, in order to
make change, and progress in the world
(yes.. some things are an inside job).

God.. is a crafty bitch.
She makes them look like you, so you find them
endearing.
so hearing truths from their mouths is slightly
more palatable
but also that much more terrifying.

Life.. being born every day.
that women play off as if it aint no thang..
(to make life, house life, give life, and raise life..)
..a string of casual miracles.

And down they go – through birth canals
blinded and screaming..

Welcome! to Life!
It's.... funcomfortable!

IV. "Two Wolves [a parable]"

In the heart of every man, are two wolves battling
one another.

One is Fear. The other is Love.

"which wolf wins, father?"

"whichever one you feed."
Your fears and hate?
your hopes and dreams -

What grows is the one you choose to feed.

V. "The Three Ways to Look at the Ocean"

The force of the ocean, is a force you will never win,
but at best, learn how to navigate.

1. You can stand at the shore, staring into the
horizon.. as the waves come in from sea.. crashing in,
over and over again.. Coming at us. All the time.
Why won't they stop?? it never stops.

2. Or, you can turn 90 degrees, and see the ocean
on a profile -
How the floor slopes from deep to shallow,
the waves, on a profile with their crests, and their
troughs,
How the moon affects the tide, and understand
the fabric of the whole.
How to make it work for you, not against you.

3. Or, you can turn again -
Now your back to the ocean, staring at the sky,
bobbing up, down, with the waves,
Supported by the force of the ocean,
and say... "what waves?"

The force of the ocean, is a force you shall never
win but at best, learn how to navigate.

Stay On It | Eastman arr. Leopold

invoice | serpentwithfeet

I'd be a stencil of a man
I'd taste the sting of violent hands
If it weren't for you, if it weren't for you
I'm sorry for calling your love "sickness"
I needed your strength but mocked your thickness
But I owe so much to you, owe so much to you

Whatever makes you cold freezes me
Even when we grow old you'll speak to me
Whatever makes you cold freezes me, freezes me,
freezes me

He straddles the equator, not the fence
Taught us to break our wrists, not our promises
Not our promises, he always keeps his promises
Because of him lesser men have set their father's
homes ablaze
And as the smoke billowed all those men became
The boys they never got to be, never got to be

Whatever makes you cold freezes me
Even when we grow old you'll speak to me
Whatever makes you cold freezes me, freezes me,
freezes me
Oh, I'm committed to you

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Alarm Will Sound is a Grammy® Award-winning 22-member band committed to innovative performances and recordings of today's music. The group has established a reputation for performing demanding music with energetic skill. *The New York Times* said that Alarm Will Sound is "one of the most vital and original ensembles on the American music scene."

With classical skill and unlimited curiosity, Alarm Will Sound takes on music from a wide variety of styles. The group itself includes many composer-performers, which allows for an unusual degree of insight into the creation and performance of new work.

Alarm Will Sound is the resident ensemble at the Mizzou International Composers Festival. Held each July at the University of Missouri in Columbia, the festival features eight world premieres by early-career composers.

Alarm Will Sound may be heard on nineteen recordings, including *Land of Winter*, the group's most recent release featuring music of Donnacha Dennehy. Alarm Will Sound's genre-bending, critically acclaimed *Acoustica* features live-performance arrangements of music by electronica guru Aphex Twin.

Recent performances reflect Alarm Will Sound's boundary-pushing ethos. In October 2022, the group presented an overnight performance of John Luther Adams' *Ten Thousand Birds* at the Paris Philharmonie during Nuit Blanche, playing four cycles between 9 PM and 4 AM for thousands of audience members. In September 2024, the group premiered David T. Little's *What Belongs to You* at the Modlin Center for the Performing Arts, based on Garth Greenwell's novel, featuring Grammy® Award-winning tenor Karim Sulayman and directed by Mark Morris. The work was featured in *The New York Times*. In 2023, Alarm Will Sound performed Mary Kouyoumdjian's Pulitzer Prize-finalist *Paper Pianos* at EMPAC, a multimedia exploration of refugee experiences. Additionally, its 2024 *Sun Dogs* tour highlighted groundbreaking collaborations blending music and film across four U.S. cities. It was created in collaboration with composers Arooj Aftab, Daniel Wohl, Devonté Hynes and Rafiq Bhatia, and done in partnership with Liquid Music.

In 2011, at Carnegie Hall, the group presented *1969*, a multimedia event that used music, images, text and staging to tell the compelling story of great musicians—John Lennon, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Paul McCartney, Luciano Berio, Yoko Ono and Leonard Bernstein—striving for a new music and a new world amidst the turmoil of the late 1960s. *1969's* unconventional approach combining music, history and ideas was critically praised by *The New York Times* as "a swirling, heady meditation on the intersection of experimental and commercial spheres, and of social and aesthetic agendas."

Alarm Will Sound has been presented by Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, le Poisson Rouge, Miller Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Kitchen, the Bang on a Can Marathon, Disney Hall, the Kimmel Center, Library of Congress, the Walker Arts Center, Cal Performances, Stanford Live, Duke Performances and the Warhol Museum. International tours include the Holland Festival, Sacrum Profanum, Moscow's Art November, St. Petersburg's Pro Arte Festival and the Barbican.

The members of the ensemble have also demonstrated its commitment to education through residency performances and activities at the Eastman School of Music, Manhattan School of Music, Princeton University, New York University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

alarmwillsound.com

Alan Pierson (Conductor and Artistic Director, Alarm Will Sound)

Pierson has been praised as "a dynamic conductor and musical visionary" by *The New York Times*, a "conductor of monstrous skill" by *Newsday*, "gifted and electrifying" by *The Boston Globe* and "one of the most exciting figures in new music today" by *Fanfare*. In addition to his work as artistic director of Alarm Will Sound, he has served as Artistic Director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic and guest conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, L.A. Opera, Nationaltheater Mannheim, the London Sinfonietta, the Steve Reich Ensemble, the Orchestra of St. Luke's,

the New World Symphony and the Silk Road Project, among others. He is co-director of the Northwestern University Contemporary Music Ensemble and has been a visiting faculty conductor at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, the Eastman School of Music and the Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity.

Passionate about using storytelling to bring listeners inside of contemporary music, Pierson has led the creation of innovative musical experiences, like Alarm Will Sound's *1969* and Soundbites video series, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic's *Brooklyn Village* project. Pierson has collaborated with major composers and performers, including Yo Yo Ma, Steve Reich, Dawn Upshaw, Osvaldo Golijov, John Adams, John Luther Adams, Augusta Read Thomas, David Lang, Michael Gordon and La Monte Young as well as with choreographers Mark Morris, Christopher Wheeldon, Akram Khan and Eliot Feld. He received bachelor's degrees in physics and music from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a doctorate in conducting from the Eastman School of Music. He has recorded for Nonesuch Records, Cantaloupe Music, Sony Classical, Oehms Classics and Sweetspot DVD.

Bora Yoon (Composer, Narrator, Vocals)

Yoon is a Korean-American composer, vocalist and sound artist who conjures audiovisual soundscapes using digital devices, voice and instruments from a variety of cultures and historical centuries to formulate storytelling through music, movement and sound. She has been featured on the front-page of *The Wall Street Journal* as well as in *WIRE magazine*, TED and the National Endowment for the Arts podcast for her use of unusual instruments and everyday found objects as music. She evokes what George Lewis describes as "a kind of sonic memory garden" using voice, viola, Tibetan singing bowls, vocoder, Bible pages, bike bells, turntable, walkie-talkies, chimes, water and electronics. As a performer/composer, Yoon has presented her work around the globe at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, BAM, Visiones Sonoras (Mexico), Festival of World Cultures (Poland), Nam Jun Paik Museum (South Korea) and PROTOTYPE Opera Theater Now Festival, and served as an artist in residence with the Experimental Media Performing Arts Center (EMPAC), The Hermitage and TED Fellows. As a composer, she has been commissioned by Sō Percussion, Alarm Will Sound, Cabrillo Orchestra and Voices of Ascension Chorus and Orchestra; received awards from the New York Foundation of the Arts (Music/Sound), Foundation for Contemporary Art, Asian American Arts Alliance, Princeton University, Fromm Foundation at Harvard Music, Barlow Endowment, Sorel Organization and Opera America; and been featured at international festivals, on Apple TV's *Pachinko* series and on WNYC (NPR). borayoon.com

serpentwithfeet (Composer, Narrator, Vocals)

serpentwithfeet is an avant-garde R&B vocalist and performance artist whose body of work is rooted in dueling obsessions with the ephemeral and the everlasting—key components of his artistic journey from a childhood stint as a choirboy in Baltimore through his time at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, where he studied music.

serpent's vision is crafted and honed from myriad inspirations: authors like Essex Hemphill; towering works like Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*; and icons like Geoffrey Holder and Brandy. All of it refracts into serpent's singular voice and artistry. In addition to his multiple studio albums, he has written music for film and TV shows like *The Inspection* and *Love, Victor*, and his collaborations range from the experimental to adult contemporary with features on songs from Björk, Daniel Caesar, Virgil Abloh, Ellie Goulding and Ty Dolla \$ign. serpent has a prestigious touring history, which includes being featured as a special guest on multiple tours with Björk and as an opening act for both Rosalía and André 3000.

In 2023, serpent toured *Heart of Brick*, a theatrical dance and music production he conceived. The evocative performance was directed by Wu Tsang and choreographed by Raja Feather Kelly; Designer Carlos Soto and poet Donte Collins completed the team of luminous artists. *Heart of Brick* was co-commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association, the Joyce Theater Foundation, the International Summer Festival (Kampnagel) and the LA Phil.

serpentwithfeet continues to move the needle of his craft. He was a featured soloist in the 2025 production of *Gospel* at Colonus at Little Island directed by Misha Chowdhury. He also joined Wild Up as guest soloist, for a moving tribute at the LA Phil, honoring the musical legacies of Arthur Russell and Julius Eastman.

TIBURTINA ENSEMBLE

CELESTIAL HARMONY: MUSIC FOR THE
HEAVENLY COURT BY HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

APR 23



The Czech Republic's Tiburtina Ensemble performs exquisite interpretations of medieval repertoire with an all-female collective of vocalists and a harpist. The ensemble comes to Philadelphia for the first time with *Celestial Harmony*, a program of glorious music by Hildegard of Bingen, an influential musician, theologian and healer, and one of few prominent women of the time. Hailed for "creating a musical experience that was as enchanting, as it was engrossing," (New York Classical Review) Tiburtina Ensemble explores the visionary legacy of a true Renaissance woman.

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