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Earplay Set for 33rd Season and Their Second Snapshot Festival With West Edge

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Earplay trio: Peter Josheff, Brenda Tom, Thalia Moore | *Credit: Yen Bachmeier*

Seldom does an organization, especially a small one, have as varied — and important — news to share as San Francisco's [Earplay New Chamber Music](http://earplay.org/www/homepage.php) (<http://earplay.org/www/homepage.php>), now in alliance with another champion of new music, [West Edge Opera](http://www.westedgeopera.org/) (<http://www.westedgeopera.org/>). To wit:

- A brave season of brand-new music, chock-full of world and West Coast premieres
- Collaboration with West Edge Opera in [Snapshot 2018](http://www.westedgeopera.org/snapshot/) (<http://www.westedgeopera.org/snapshot/>), an incubator for new operas
- Earplay Music Director Mary Chun's ongoing Broadway-to-China project

About to embark on its 33rd season, Earplay was founded by a consortium of composers and musicians dedicated to the performance of new chamber music. Since 1985, Earplay has performed 608 works by 333 composers, including 146 world premieres and 86 new works commissioned by the ensemble. Beginning on **Feb. 5, in the Wilsey Opera Center's Atrium Theater,** (<https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3172480>) Earplay presents a program of 21st-century music, including the world premiere of *I'm nobody, who are you?* from Franck Bedrossian, a piece described as a disarming combination of bass flute, contrabass clarinet, and viola. 2018 featured composer Richard Festinger's contribution is the song cycle *Coming of Age*, to text by the late Denis Johnson and featuring soprano Nikki Einfeld. *Three Whistler Miniatures* by Helen Grimes rounds out the bill.



Soprano Nikki Einfeld is featured at Earplay's first concert of the 33rd season, on Feb. 5

On March 19, also in the Atrium, the season's second concert will offer James Dashow's *Soundings in Pure Duration n.4* for viola and octophonic electronic sounds; Festinger's *Kleinen doch emsigen* for flute, clarinet, viola, and cello; Daniel Godsil's *Aeropittura* for flute, viola, cello, and piano; a new work by Maija Hynninen for flute and bass clarinet; and Vera Ivanova's *Sagittarius* for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano.

The season's third concert will switch to Herbst Theater on April 30. The program includes Turgut Erçetin's *Resonances (b): Tella* for clarinet, violin, viola, and cello; Festinger's *The Way Things Go* for flute and piano; Pablo Ortiz's *and all the phonies go mad with joy* for violin, viola, and cello; world premieres of Mark Wings's *Night-Voiced* for viola and piano, and an as-yet untitled work by Jon Yu for clarinet and violin.

Meanwhile, Earplay partners with West Edge in the new edition of **Snapshot** (<http://www.westedgeopera.org/snapshot/>), a fascinating program of excerpts from new, previously unproduced operas by West Coast composers and librettists.



From the 2017 Snapshot program: Jacob Thompson and Ann Moss in *Famous* | Credit: Jeremy Knight

Performances will take place Feb. 24, in the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall, in Berkeley, and Feb. 25, in the Taube Atrium Theater, San Francisco Veterans Memorial Building. The program includes works by Brian Rosen, Katherine Saxon, Larry London, Erling Wold, and Cyril Deaconoff.

The scene from Rosen's *Death of a Playboy*, with libretto by the composer, is right off recent headlines about a clash threatening to disrupt Hugh Hefner's funeral. It is conducted by Chun, and features Julia Hathaway, Molly Mahoney, Darron Flagg, and Jason Sarten.

Excerpts from Saxon's *452 Jamestown Place*, which again has a libretto by the composer, will be conducted by Jonathan Khuner. The story is of a young woman who terrifies her boyfriend with outbursts from multiple personalities; the singers are Heidi Moss and Sarten.

Moss is featured again in London's *Dynamo*, along with Jacob Thompson, Flagg and Sarten. Next is Wold's *She Who is Alive*, with Mahoney and J Raymond Meyers. The setting for Wold's opera, with libretto by Robert Harris, is a futuristic empire, where a warlord is dealing with a dissident, female, scientist prisoner.

Finally, there is Deaconoff's *The Last Tycoon*, with libretto adapted by David Yezzi from F. Scott Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, which was presented in a workshop performance at West Bay Opera in 2011. It will be conducted by Chun, with Julia Hathaway, Meyers, Thompson, and Sarten.

“It’s a tremendous value to opera composers and librettists to have a forum like Snapshot where they can flex their craft in real professional practice,” Chun says. “I love the artistic and technical work there for its collaborative nature amongst singers, instrumentalists, composers, librettists, conductor — and also audience with the Q&A talkback after the show.”

When Chun is not conducting here, in Slovakia, Texas, or elsewhere, she is off to China, where she is heading a **successful project to bring Broadway musicals to audiences** (<https://www.sfcv.org/events-calendar/artist-spotlight/earplay-maestro-helps-to-export-broadway-to-china>) unfamiliar with the genre.

Chun’s next project is the Rodgers & Hammerstein *Cinderella* in Mandarin, produced in Shanghai in May.

Four years ago, Chun became the first American music director to be invited to China to premiere Mandarin language versions of Broadway hits such as *Avenue Q*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, and most recently, *Man of La Mancha* in Beijing and Shanghai. *Avenue Q* ran for months in both cities before going on a 50-city national tour.

You can hear music from previous Earplay offerings at their site for licensed audio

links: <http://www.earplay.org/www/media.php>
(<http://www.earplay.org/www/media.php>)

Janos Gereben (<https://www.sfcv.org/author/janos-gereben>) appreciates news tips, corrections, and words of encouragement at janosg@gmail.com (<mailto:janosg@gmail.com>).



Earplay’s Mary Chun working with her cast of musicals in China, shown here with Kain Liu as Don Quixote | Credit: SEVENAGES Productions

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