



PARTCH Ensemble

Music

June 15

11 AM & 3 PM

REDCAT

Roy and Edna Disney CalArts Theater

CALARTS

California Institute of the Arts

We gratefully acknowledge that we operate on the traditional lands of the Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash people including the Gabrieleño, Fernandeño, and Ventureño; members of the Takic and Chumashan language families; and other Indigenous peoples who made their homes in and around the area we now call Los Angeles. We honor their ancestors past, present, and future, and recognize their continued existence and contributions to our society.

PROGRAM

Co-presented by REDCAT and MicroFest

Summer 1955 Harry Partch 12 min.

- Two Settings of Lewis Carroll – “The Mock Turtle Song”
- By the Rivers of Babylon
- Two Settings of Lewis Carroll – “O Frabjous Day!”

Earth Studies Evan Ziporyn 35 min.

I. Earth II. Water III. Air IV. Fire V. Aether

— *intermission* —

Summer 1955 Harry Partch 20 min.

- Potion Scene (Romeo & Juliet, Act 4, Sc.3)
- Ulysses Departs from the Edge of the World

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HEAVE HO

Stephen James Taylor

15 min.

I. Open Sea

II. Welcome Aboard

III. Row vs. Wade

IV. Solo Voyage

V. Magic Ship

VI. Right Now

PARTCH Ensemble: **Erin Barnes** (Diamond Marimba),
Alison Bjorkedal (Canon, Kithara II), **Daniel Corral** (Surrogate
Kithara), **Tim Feeney** (Canons, Eroica), **Dustin Donahue** (Bass
Marimba, Spoils of War, Cloud Chamber Bowls),
Erika Duke-Kirkpatrick (Cello), **Vicki Ray** (Canons,
Chromelodeon), **John Schneider** (Adapted Guitar II, Canon,
Surrogate Kithara, Voice), **Nick Terry** (Boo), **Alex Wand** (Adapted
Guitar III, Canon)

Special Guests: **Brian Walsh** (Clarinet), **Molly Pease**,
Gabby Coenen, **Joanna Wallfisch** (Sopranos),
Stephen James Taylor (Conductor, Guitar)

Team HEAVE HO: **Richard Tandy** (DJ Prosody), **Cameron Taylor**
(cartoon voices), **Subhraag Singh** (Infinitone Sax, software),
Marcus Hobbs (Wilsonic Software), **Tony Joy** (Sound Particles
software), **Harvey Starr** (Wilson Microzone 990 keyboard),
Stephen James Taylor (Video editor/additional instruments/
lyrics), **Rich Raposa** (Sound Consultant), **Storyblocks.com**,
Dall-E (Visual source)

As always, our gratitude to the artisans who have helped recreate Partch's instruments: **Skip Abelson** (Diamond & Bass Marimbas), **Kent Arnold** (Chromelodeon), **Chris Banta** (Boo, Marimba Eroica, Spoils of War), **Greg Brandt** (Adapted Guitar II), **Scott Hackleman** (Kithara II, Harmonic Canons), **Robert Portillo** (Adapted Viola & Janus II/III canons)

This performance is made possible in part by a grant from the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs.

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Summer 1955 was a busy time for Harry Partch. He had just finished the first version of *The Bewitched* but was unable to put together the ensemble of a singer and eleven musicians needed to perform its forty-minute, ten movement scenario. Instead, he continued the project of re-writing several earlier pieces to include his recently expanded group of handmade bespoke instruments. Clearly satisfied with his re-orchestration of

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Barstow the preceding November, he rescored the other 1940s Americana works *U.S. Highball*, *San Francisco*, and *The Letter* (later known collectively as *The Wayward*), as well as two works from the 1930s *By the Rivers of Babylon* and Shakespeare's famed "Potion Scene" from *Romeo & Juliet*. Partch used the title *Summer 1955* to copyright these last two updated scores along with the *Two Settings from Lewis Carroll* (1954) and the new *Ulysses Departs from the Edge of the World* (1955).

A Young People's Concert produced by the Mill Valley Outdoor Art Club presented the premiere of Partch's charming settings of texts by Victorian mathematician, photographer, and author Charles Dodgson, a.k.a. Lewis Carroll. Also known as the "Lobster Quadrille," the ***Mock Turtle's Song*** found in *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* spoofs the famous "The Spider and the Fly" with a whiting trying to entice a snail to join a dance that will throw him in the sea along with a bevy of lobsters and turtles. But the promise of transporting him closer to France—world renowned consumers of escargot—ensures that this particular mollusk will most certainly NOT join the dance.

Alice's adventures *Through the Looking Glass* finds her reading a very strange poem entitled "Jabberwocky" that is actually written sdrawkcab (backwards). She quickly realizes that, living in an inverted world, she must use a mirror to read it, only to learn that it is a ***Frabjous Day*** indeed when a vorpal sword can slay a Jabberwock! (Incidentally, the author

requested that MacMillan print the poem backwards on the page, but the publisher demurred on account of cost. A century later, Marshall McLuhan surely would have enthusiastically obliged.)

Over the centuries, the 2,500-year-old 137th Psalm has been set to music by countless composers in as many styles. Partch's *By the Rivers of Babylon* inserts a plaintive, wordless lament between the third and fourth lines of the intoned biblical text. The familiar story tells of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the subsequent exile of its inhabitants. Though 25 centuries later, it is almost impossible to hear these words and not be reminded of today's tales of unbearable devastation and displacement.

“*Earth Studies* is inspired by Aristotle’s classical elements: *Earth* (cold and dry), *Water* (cold and wet), *Air* (hot and wet), and *Fire* (hot and dry)—with a fifth, *Aether*, literally the quintessential, standing apart from the rest. Aristotle offered a framework to understand the universe—often wrong, but deeply generative. In navigating the universe of Harry Partch, I found myself seeking similar orientation: resonances, hidden consonances, subjectively felt paths through unfamiliar terrain. Some of these reflect Partch’s stated theories; others maybe not so much. I aimed to honor not just his tuning systems and acoustic innovations, but his deeper legacy—the pursuit of emotional and expressive depth through the mathematics of sound.

“**Earth** carves out some slippery diatonic scales one can find in Partch’s 43-tone system. **Water** flows through pentatonic chords uniquely linkable in Just Intonation. **Air** adds some rainy mist to the harmonics on the Cloud Chamber Bowls. **Fire** sparks from the friction between Otonal and Utonal harmonic structures. **Aether** returns us to the diatonic earth scales—because, as Joni Mitchell reminds us, that’s what we are: ‘stardust... billion-year-old carbon.’”

—Evan Ziporyn

Earth Studies is a prelude to a forthcoming evening-length work by Speculative Architects Rania Ghosn & El Hadi Jazairy, aka DesignEarth.

Partch’s initial setting of Shakespeare’s **Potion Scene** (1931) was among his first pieces for voice and Adapted Viola. His 1955 orchestration underscores the emotional intensity of the drama in much the way that film music amplifies the actions of a script. The deep, foreboding pulse of the low marimbas builds the tension while the shrieking night spirits that inhabit the tomb tingle the spine, all leading to that inexorable moment when Juliet’s fate is finally sealed.

Western literature also inspired Partch’s **Ulysses Departs from the Edge of the World**, best known in its final version for trumpet, baritone sax and percussion. The original was written for the solo trumpet of jazz great Chet Baker, who sadly

never found the time to play it, in spite of composer's later addition of the sax part for Baker's longtime duo partner Gerry Mulligan. Tonight may well be only the second time the clarinet version has ever been heard: it was premiered by students at a faculty concert at the University of Illinois soon after Partch's arrival. And though BMI sent a copy to Benny Goodman, he also declined to play it. Only the first version bears the subtitle — *A Minor Adventure in Rhythm* — though all three share the opening instructions, "Dithyrambic, Jubilant, Melancholy, all at once."

"**HEAVE HO** is a 6-movement piece embracing the spirit of perseverance in the face of adversity. At times humorous, at times jarring, at times cinematic, the music vibrantly romps through the harmonic and melodic fields provided by the Partch's instruments and tuning system. His 43-tone scale is comfortably pulled into a newly created eclectic genre: Kendrick Lamar-meets Terry Riley-meets Ringling Brothers-meets Eno-meets Zappa-meets Leadbelly-meets Partch. Go figure."

—Stephen James Taylor

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Stephen James Taylor has a unique musical identity as a composer of music for the concert stage as well as modern

media. He has a whole arsenal of homemade instruments and sound sources, often used in his Afro-Futurist style that represents a blend of orchestral, classical, rock, blues, gospel, world music, choral, and avant-garde genres. His past projects include dozens of movie and television scores that have been honored by a handful of both Emmy and Annie (Animation) nominations. He was commissioned to write an orchestral suite for the Opening Ceremonies of the 1996 Olympics and was one of the conductors of the Atlanta Symphony for that occasion. He studied microtonality with Erv Wilson for 20 years with whom he helped develop a new 810 key microtonal keyboard used in many of the above scores. A filmmaker as well, he created the award-winning documentary, *SURFING THE SONIC SKY*, the science fiction short, *I AM HERE*, as well as a research documentary about the micro-geometry of subatomic matter with co-director Jesus Trevino called *Gurule Shells, A Quantum Metaphor*.
| stephenjamestaylor.com

Evan Ziporyn is a composer/conductor/clarinetist whose music has taken him from Balinese temples to concert halls around the world. He has composed for and collaborated with Yo-Yo Ma, Brooklyn Rider, Maya Beiser, Ethel, Anna Sofie Von Otter, the American Composers Orchestra, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Iva Bittova, Terry Riley, Don Byron, Wu Man, and Bang on a Can. In 2017, his arrangements were featured on Ken Burns

and Lynn Novick's *The Vietnam War*, and on Silkroad's Grammy-winning album *Sing Me Home*. From 1992-2012 he served as music director, producer, and composer/arranger for the Bang on a Can Allstars, winning Musical America's Ensemble of the Year award in 2005. He has also recorded and toured with Paul Simon (You're the One) and the Steve Reich Ensemble, sharing in the latter's 1998 Grammy for Best Chamber Music Performance. In 2012 he formed the Eviyan Trio with Iva Bittova and Gyan Riley, with whom he recorded two albums. He has also released numerous albums on Cantaloupe Music, New World, CRI, Airplane Ears, and other labels. At MIT he is Distinguished Professor of Music, Director of the Center for Art, Science and Technology, and currently Guest Director of the MIT Symphony Orchestra. | ziporyn.com

PARTCH Ensemble, the Grammy® Award winning & triple Grammy® nominated new music group, specializes in the music & instruments of the iconoclastic American Maverick composer Harry Partch, who created some of the most alluring and emotionally powerful music of the 20th century. He composed music for drama, dance-theater, multi-media, vocals and chamber music—all to be performed on the extraordinary orchestra of instruments that he designed and built himself. The Ensemble has performed for the LA County Museum of Art, UCLA's Partch Centennial Celebration, Sacramento's Festival

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of New American Music, Mills College, UNM Albuquerque, the Getty Center, Repertory Dance Theatre of Salt Lake City, Carlsbad Music Festival, Jacaranda Music, Guadalajara International Book Fair, Grand Performances, Brooklyn's Roulette, Philadelphia's Kimmel Center, the San Francisco Symphony, and South Korea's Tongyeong International Music Festival. In 2004, they made their REDCAT debut premiering Harry Partch's *Bitter Music* and have returned every year since. Their collaboration with Philadelphia's PRISM Saxophone Quartet includes Lisa Bielawa's Emmy Award winning opera for TV/Internet VIREO: *The Autobiography of a Witches Accuser*, and the CD of newly commissioned works *Color Theory* (XAS Records). *SONATA DEMENTIA*, Volume 3 of their award-winning Bridge Records "Music of Harry Partch" series, was released in 2019, while their premiere recording of the complete *The Wayward* will be released by Bridge in Fall of 2025.

REDCAT CREW

Lighting Programmer/Deck: Jerrel Milan

Deck: Christa Troester

Audio Engineer: Zach Hazelwood

Audio Assistants: Alex Melzer, Kensaku Shinohara

QLab: Anthony Storniolo

A/V Technician: Thomas J. Firestone

REDCAT STAFF

Jacques Boudreau, Facilities and Production Manager

Jheanelle Brown, Film Programming

Chu-Hsuan Chang, Associate Technical Director, Lighting

Brent Charles, Box Office and Visitor Services Manager

Katy Dammers, Deputy Director and Chief Curator,
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Allison Keating, Deputy Director, Finance and Operations

Daniela Lieja Quintanar, Chief Curator and Deputy Director,
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Lucio Maramba, Associate Technical Director,
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