



PARTCH Ensemble  
• **Bewitching Petals**

Music

**June 26 - 27**

**8 PM**

**CaLARTS**

**REDCAT**

**ROY AND EDNA DISNEY  
CALARTS THEATER**

## **ABOUT THE PROGRAM**

PARTCH Ensemble—the Grammy Award-winning ensemble specializing in the music of the iconoclastic composer Harry Partch—debuts newly constructed, custom-built replicas of instruments designed by Partch in their annual survey of his music. The evening begins with excerpts from the rarely heard Partch piece, “On the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma”—a kaleidoscope of swirling timbres that amazes with the composer’s “multiple exposure” technique—and concludes with the “Prologue” & “Epilogue” from Partch’s midcentury piece, “The Bewitched.” New compositions include a solo setting of one of Partch’s favorite Chinese poets (Li Po, 701-762 C.E.) and the world premiere of Daniel Corral’s “Parable of the Bitter.” Partch’s instruments entitled the Crychord, Chromelodeon II, Zymo-Xyl, and Gubagubi will have their debut performances with the Ensemble, providing what *LA Weekly* describes as “weird and wonderful sonorities, truly unlike anything else on Earth or any neighboring celestial body.”

The program includes an instrument “petting zoo”: audiences are encouraged to interact with the instruments on stage after the show.

## **PROGRAM**

*Co-presented by REDCAT and MicroFest*

— *And On the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma* (1966) [Excerpts]

Harry Partch

*Listening to Lu-Tzu* (2002)

John Schneider

- Text: Li Po (China, 701-762 c.e.), translated David Hinton

— INTERMISSION —

*Parable of the Bitter* (2026)

Daniel Corral

*The Bewitched* (1956), Excerpts

Harry Partch

- Prologue: “The Lost Musicians Mix Magic”

- Epilogue

## ABOUT THE WORKS

— *And On the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma* (1966) [Excerpts]

When Harry Partch returned to the Bay Area after six years in the Midwest (1956-1962), finding an affordable space to set up his two tons of exquisite hand-built instruments was virtually impossible in San Francisco. But 35 miles north, in the sleepy town of Petaluma, he visited an abandoned chick hatchery whose approaching lane was strewn with rose and camelia petals. It's L-shaped, amply windowed 1,100 square feet expanse fit the bill perfectly. And so it was that his new home—acquired seven years after his previous abandonment of the West Coast—inspired the title of the series of instrumental sketches that would become the source material for his masterwork *Delusion of the Fury* (1966).

The *Petals* are “Studies in techniques, timbres, double rhythms, double tonalities” that explore various combinations of his two dozen instruments and further develop the multiple-exposure form that he had used so successfully in *Castor & Pollux* (1952). Here, the twenty-three 1-minute duets and trios he calls “verses” are performed twice: first in order one-by-one, followed immediately by the same music in the same exact order, but this time two-by-two (Verses 1+2, Verses 3+4, etc.) culminating in a raucous triple-exposure septet when Verses 21+22+23 are played simultaneously. The result was some of the most intricate and technically challenging music Partch ever wrote.

In *Castor & Pollux*, the tempo of all six duets remained steady throughout, while the metric patterns—number of beats per measure—were also exactly the same for all parts. In *Petals*, however, many verses have different shifting meters and tempi such that in one quintet, three instruments are playing in 6/8 with the 8th note =180 while two others perform in 5/4 at quarter note = 150. Elsewhere a quartet has one duo playing in 5½/8 at quarternote = 120 while another plays in 20/16 at 5/16 = 96. The resulting kaleidoscopic warp and weft of microtonal counterpoint must have surely endazzled those at the UCLA 1966 premiere, no less than it does today.

### *Listening to Lu-Tzu Play the Ch'in On A Moonlit Night* (2002)

Text: Li Po (China, 701-762c.e.), translated. David Hinton. Partch's affection for Li Po was amply demonstrated by his first major composition, the song cycle *17 Lyrics of Li Po* (1933) in a style he called "tone declamation" for voice and Adapted Viola. Adapted Guitar II sounds rather like an ancient Chinese ch'in, the venerated table zither strung with 7 silk strings, said to be the favorite of Confucius. Its sliding notes, harmonics, and subtleties of expression, famously inspired several millenia of evocative repertoire, and reading David Hinton's new translations of the medieval master inspired this piece.

## *Parable of the Bitter* (2026)

*Parable of the Bitter* takes its title from two stories centered around travel across California: Octavia Butler's two *Parable* books and Harry Partch's travelogue *Bitter Music* (OK, that's technically three stories). While *Parable of the Bitter* isn't programmatic, these writings remained in my mind as I composed it. There are six sections that I think of as Verses 1-6, borrowing Partch's terminology from *And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma*. I originally planned to write a collection of "multiple exposures," which is how Partch composed *Petals*. But as I wrote, the music moved away from that idea and only fragments of multiple exposures now remain. To organize harmonies within Partch's 43-note scale, I used the lattice geometry of Erv Wilson's combination product sets. This was a natural pairing, since Wilson drew the illustrations and diagrams in the 2nd edition of Partch's book *Genesis of a Music*, influenced the design of Partch's *Quadrangularis Reversum*, and in 1969 reimagined Partch's original 31-note scale as a 1•3•5•7•9•11 Eikosany diamond. *Parable of the Bitter* grew out of combining the influences of Wilson, Partch, and Butler. It was completed in March 2026 while I was artist-in-residence at the Kayenta Center for the Arts.

## *The Bewitched – A Dance Satire* (1956), Excerpts

Our evening concludes with the opening and closing movements that bookend Partch's 75-minute masterwork:

### Argument

*"We are all bewitched, and mostly by accident: the accident of form, color, and sex; of prejudices conditioned from the cradle on up, of the particular ruts we have found ourselves in or have dug for ourselves because of our individual needs. Those in a long-tenanted rut enjoy larger comforts of mind and body, and as compensation it is given to others who are not so easily domesticated to become mediums for the transmission of perception, more frequently. Among these are the lost musicians.*

*The present-day musician grows up in a half-world between "good" music and "not-so-good" music. Even when he has definitely made his choice between the two, he is still affected by the other, and to that extent he is dichotomous and disoriented. His head is bathed in an ancient light through a Gothic window while his other end swings like a miniature suspension bridge in a cool right-angle gale. The perception of displaced musicians may germinate, evolve, and mature in concert, through a developing at-one-ness, through their beat...*

*I conceived and wrote it in California in the period 1952-55, following several performances of my version of Sophocle's Oedipus. In spirit, if not wholly in content, it is a satyr-play. It is a seeking for release—through satire, whimsy, magic, ribaldry—from the catharsis of tragedy. It is an essay toward a miraculous abeyance of civilized rigidity, in the feeling that the modern spirit might thereby find some ancient and magical sense of rebirth.”*

– Harry Partch

After the 1955 premiere, Partch added the Prologue:

*“Prologue—The Lost Musicians Mix Magic*

*The forms of strange instruments are seen on stage. How did they get here? They came on in a dark celestial silence, doing tumbles and handsprings, and for no other purpose than to be discovered by these musicians in this theater before this audience.*

*One of the musicians gives a low beat, and others swing in, one at a time. They are neolithic primitives in their unspoken acceptance of magic as real, unconsciously reclaiming an all-but-lost value for the exploitation of their perception in an age of scientific hierarchs—a value lost only about a minute ago in relation to that ancient time when the first single cell moved itself in such autoerotic agitation that it split in two. The first animate magic.*

*Note: The slow, rather lengthy and contrapuntal melodic passage heard in the Prologue...is based on a chant of the Cahuilla Indians of the southern California desert.”*

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

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 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*, Volume 4 was released by Bridge in Fall of 2025.

Musicians: **Erin Barnes** (Diamond Marimba, Spoils of War), **Cory Beers** (Cloud Chamber Bowls, Drone Devil, Eroica, Zymo-Xyl), **Matt Cook** (Canons, Gourd Tree, Eroica), **Daniel Corral** (Canon), **Dustin Donahue** (Bass Marimba), **Matt LeVeque** (Canons, Eroica, Gourd Tree, Spoils, Zymo-Xyl), **Vicki Ray** (Canons, Chromelodeons, conductor), **John Schneider** (Adapted Guitar II, Canons, Crychord, Guzheng, Voice), **Derek Stein** (Cello), **Nick Terry** (Boo, Zymo-Xyl), **Alex Wand** (Surrogate Kithara)

Special Guests: **Sara Andon** (Piccolo), **Jordan Curcuruto** (Spoils of War), **Kevin Good** (Kithara II), **Katie Good** (Kithara II), **Aron Kallay** (Chromelodeon), **Kozue Matsumoto** (Koto), **Philip O’Connor** (Bass Clarinet), **Joanna Wallfisch** (Soprano), **Brian Walsh** (Clarinet)

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

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**ROY AND EDNA DISNEY CALARTS THEATER**

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Please help us bring you the rest of *The Bewitched* next year at REDCAT (more new commissions, too!)



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