



REDCAT

# WORDS AND MUSIC: BONNIE BARNETT

OCTOBER 3, 2012 8:30 PM

presented by

REDCAT

Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater

California Institute of the Arts

**CaLARTS**

# WORDS AND MUSIC: BONNIE BARNETT

Wednesday, October 3, 2012, 8:30 pm

## PROGRAM

### *Call and Response*

Elaine Terranova, reading the works of Dorothea Grossman; Michael Vlatkovich, trombone; Tom McNalley, electric guitar; Rich West, drums

## Intermission

### *Words and Music*

Bonnie Barnett, voice; Anders Nilsson, electric guitar; Ken Filiano, bass

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

### *Call and Response*

The two-part evening opens with a tribute to the late Los Angeles poet **Dottie Grossman** who, among other things, was known for signature “call and response” live performances with musicians. The opening set revisits this format, as visiting poet Elaine Terranova reads from Grossman’s poetry while the instrumentalists volley back with improvised responses.

### *Words and Music*

Armed with a sonorous, agile contralto, plenty of extended techniques, and a fearless approach to free jazz improvisation, “extreme vocalist” **Bonnie Barnett** trades chops with consummate players **Ken Filiano**, on bass, and **Anders Nilsson**, on electric guitar. In addition to Barnett’s intense, often otherworldly wordless improvisations, the program also includes idiosyncratic settings of texts by Gertrude Stein, Gary Snyder and Federico García Lorca.

## ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

After studying classical, 20<sup>th</sup>-century and early music at the University of Illinois, U.C. San Diego and the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, vocalist **Bonnie Barnett** turned her focus to new music, publishing a pioneering paper on vocal multiphonics—“Aspects of Vocal Multiphonics” (*Interface, Journal of New Music Research*, Amsterdam and Ghent, 1977). She was a member of Kenneth Gaburo’s New Music Choral Ensemble (1967–72), as well as an original member of Pauline Oliveros’ Women’s Ensemble (1969–74). In the late ’70s Barnett relocated to San Francisco where she developed a series of public vocal rituals called “THE TUNNEL HUM PROJECT,” and over the past 30 years has staged more than

80 HUM events. Since moving to Los Angeles in 1986, Barnett has become involved in the L.A. free jazz scene, and co-hosts a radio program ("Trilogy") that features new music in its many forms, which airs weekly on KXLU and KXLU.com. Her current ensemble, The Barnett Group—including local woodwind player Richard Wood, Santa Barbara bassist Hal Onserud and San Francisco Bay Area percussionist Garth Powell—focuses on free improvisation, creating spontaneous structures and developing group timbres. This ensemble released a CD on the pfMentum label in 2011, *In Between Dreams*, which has garnered worldwide reviews and airplay. Barnett also has a number of other CD releases on Nine Winds Records, including a 2006 duo project with bassist Ken Filiano, *Trio For Two*; a release of a work written for her voice by Hermann Bühler, *EARTHBOUND*, on For 4 Ears; and she appears on two DICE compilations. Barnett incorporates texts by Gertrude Stein, Jean-Paul Sartre, Donald Barthelme, Gary Snyder, Federico García Lorca, and the early Dada writers, among others, into her work. Greg Burk at the *LA Weekly* says: "Neo-trad jazz singers beware: Bonnie Barnett's exorcistic voice and upsetter accompanists make for cocktail spillage." And Deni Kasrel writes in *Jazz Times*: "Barnett is a vocalist of supreme flexibility: Imagine Cassandra Wilson on acid and you're on the right track." For this program, Barnett is emphasizing the texts of Stein, Snyder and García Lorca.

Bassist **Ken Filiano** performs throughout the world, playing and recording with leading artists in jazz, spontaneous improvisation, classical, world/ethnic, and interdisciplinary performance, fusing the rich traditions of the double bass with his own seemingly limitless inventiveness. Ken's solo bass CD, *Subvenire* (NineWinds), received unanimous critical praise. For this and numerous other recordings, critics have called Ken a "creative virtuoso," a "master of technique," "a paradigm of that type of artist ... who can play anything in any context and make it work, simply because he puts the music first and leaves peripheral considerations behind."

**Dorothea Grossman**, the award-winning poet (Wood Prize, Universities West Emily Dickinson Award in Poetry, Soulspeak Anthology Competition) was a native of Philadelphia, but lived and worked in Los Angeles until her death earlier this year. Her work has appeared in numerous journals and quarterlies. Her book, *Cuttings: Selected Poetry 1978-1988*, was published by Tango Press in 1996. *Poems From Cave 17* was published in 1996, and *Museum of Rain* was published by Take Out Publications in 2001. A chapbook, *The First Time I Ate Sushi*, was published by Zerx Press. Her most recent book, *The Fun of Speaking English*, published by Coffeetown Press, came out in June 2012.

Guitarist **Tom McNalley** was first introduced to Dottie Grossman in the '90s by trumpeter Rob Blakeslee, with whom he was studying. They quickly became friends and shortly thereafter Tom began working with Dottie in Call and Response. An early performance was at the Jazz Bakery with Michael Vlatkovich and Jeff Kaiser, a unit that continues to perform around Los Angeles now. Tom McNalley has played with Rob Blakeslee, John Gross, John Zorn, Nels Cline, Alex Cline and Ornette Coleman, who said that Tom was one of three guitarists whom he loved to play with (the other two were James "Blood" Ulmer and Pat Metheny). He currently lives in Los Angeles and can often be seen with his own groups as well as those of Michael Vlatkovich.

Guitarist/composer **Anders Nilsson**, who moved to New York from his native Scandinavia in 2000, leads the Fulminate Trio with Michael Evans and Ken Filiano, and also Anders Nilsson's Aorta. Both units focus on original compositions and collective improvisations with five recordings to date. He has collaborated with many artists on the New York scene, notably Sabir Mateen, Daniel Carter, Eugene Chadbourne, William Parker, and Jeff Arnal. "Nilsson's shimmering axe evokes a dimensional warp" (*Signal to Noise*). "Nilsson has a unique style and a guitar tone unlike any American jazz guitarist I can think of" (*All About Jazz*).

**Elaine Terranova's** latest book of poems is *Dames Rocket*. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The American Poetry Review*, *Boulevard*, *Prairie Schooner*, and other magazines. Her first book, *The Cult of the Right Hand*, won the 1990 Walt Whitman Award. Other books are *Damages*, *The Dog's Heart*, *Not To: New and Selected Poems*, and two chapbooks, most recently, *Elegiac: Footnotes to Rilke's Duino Elegies*. Her translation of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* was published in the Penn Greek Drama Series. Terranova has received NEA and Pew Fellowships and a Pushcart Prize. She teaches at the Community College of Philadelphia and in the MFA Creative Writing Program at Rutgers-Camden.

Trombonist, composer and arranger **Michael Vlatkovich** lives in Los Angeles, and tours extensively. In addition to leading his own ensembles, Vlatkovich has performed and recorded with a variety of singers and instrumentalists, including ROVA Saxophone Quartet, Bryan Adams, Bobby Bradford, Gerry Hemingway, and Rob Blakeslee. The magazine *JAZZIZ* has called Vlatkovich "one of the most extraordinary improvising trombonists in this country as well as overseas. Also a gifted composer and arranger, Vlatkovich is one of the leading talents among Los Angeles improvisational players. Working from the Left Coast since 1973, he is well known for tireless touring, bringing his music all over the United States, Canada, and Europe. A daring and emotionally charged performer, Vlatkovich takes delight in blending a broad variety of jazz and world music styles into his own brand of engaging and unpredictable music. His approach manages to express a raw power and beauty within a minimally structured format that allows extensive group improvisations to lead the way."

**Rich West** is a drummer, composer, French hornist, bookseller, and writer living in the L.A. area. Interest in playing music blazed on the L.A. punk scene of the late '70s, Zubin Mehta conducting Mahler, and Marxism (both branches). Studied composition, French horn, percussion, and drumset in college while playing in such bands as Camper van Beethoven and the Wrestling Worms. Recent highlight: week-long Eugene Chadbourne festival in Nancy, France. Joined forces with the likes of Oliver Lake and Jimmy Carl Black, amongst others; Dottie Grossman/Michael Vlatkovich let him play with them; Steuart Liebig duetting. Produced Eugene Chadbourne's CD *The Hills Have Jazz* and Dan Clucas' *Exile*. Two recorded releases of his own music are on the pMENTUM label: Heavenly Breakfast, a mixture of compositions and improvisations based on graphic notation; and Bedouin Hornbook, grooves, pieces, and improvisation.