



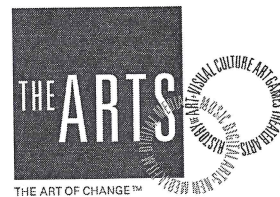
The UCSC Music Department Presents

**Music of Larry Polansky**  
A Retirement Celebration

Friday, June 7, 2019

7:30PM

**Music Center Recital Hall**  
University of California, Santa Cruz



**Music of Larry Polansky  
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**Program**

1. *park, waltz, (madison), vigil* (2009)

Amy Beal, piano

This “miniature” is a waltz set in 32-bar popular song form (AABA). It has something to do with Park Avenue and Madison Avenue in New York City.

2. Four Voice Canon #4 (1978)

Sam Cushman, Zack Hejny, Henry Wilson, Jon Myers, percussion

To date, Larry has composed around 25 different four-voice canons, for varying instrumentations. They are mensuration canons, with each voice proceeding in a different tempo. This canon and Four Voice Canon #5 were premiered and recorded by William Winant, to whom they are dedicated.

3. Five Haiku (1978)

Piano Study #1 (for Carl Ruggles) (1976)

Piano Study #2 (“March in D”) (1977)

Zach Myers, piano

The Piano Studies #1 and #2 were composed at UC Santa Cruz during Larry’s undergraduate years. They were both performed during his first of two senior recitals, on 3 June 1977. The Five Haiku are short pieces, each of which is based on a sentence from the Old Testament. They are all structured by the harmonic series.

4. *!tearrimmedis* (in memory of Grace Paley) (2008)

Ryan Odou, trumpet

Genevieve Kromm, trumpet

Maya Norman, horn

Breanna Baltaxe Admony, trombone

Anthony Morales, tuba

[Note written by Genevieve Kromm] Composed in memory of the American writer Grace Paley, *!tearrimmedis* is a rhythmic transcription of the Hebrew mourner’s kaddish. The instruments are instructed to play discrete pitches in precise rhythmic unison, with improvised descents or ascents to arrival points that evoke the space between a sigh of relief and a stunned, grief-stricken gasp. The ambiguity of mourning is suddenly codified and suspended in these moments, before tumbling apart again into fragments of old memories and lost conversations. The bottom of the score includes a quotation from Grace Paley that seems to reach out to the mourner and become a comforting subtext to accompany the words of the kaddish, as well as further informing the character and improvisational nature of the piece:

“why  
be so grandiose  
just do something  
now and then”  
 (“Birth of a Child,” *Fidelity* [2007], Grace Paley)

5. “. . .getting rid of the glue. . .” (1978)

*34 Chords: Christian Wolff in Hanover and Royalton* (1995)

Giacomo Fiore, guitar

“. . .getting rid of the glue. . .” is a phrase attributed to composer Henry Cowell, in response to the disjunct and discontinuous music of the “New York School” (John Cage, Earle Brown, Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff) during the 1950s. *34 Chords* is an homage to an old and dear friend, Christian Wolff. The piece reorchestrates for electric guitar the 34 chords of Morton Feldman’s 8-part a cappella choral work *Christian Wolff in Cambridge* (1964).

6. *Dismission (pianotood)* (2007)

Jon Myers, piano

*Dismission* redistributes the pitches of a German Christmas carol, called “O du fröhliche” (also known as “O Sanctissima”) across the entire range of the piano, and simultaneously “stretches” the time, so that all sense of continuity disappears. (Until it reappears.) This tune has roots in a Sicilian boat song; it also appears as a shape-note hymn in the *Missouri Harmony* hymnal.

7. *Onstslaan (toontood)* (2009)

Jay Arms, Giacomo Fiore, Chris Mallett, Lanier Sammons, guitars

This work for multiple guitars is an arrangement of the solo piano piece *Dismission* (see above), and uses a similar “stretching” idea. The piece was written for the Belgian guitar quartet Zwerm, who premiered the piece (with the composer on fifth guitar) in Ghent and Brussels in April 2009. This “tood” (an Americanized “etude”) is dedicated to Toon Callier, one of the founders of Zwerm.

8. *πtood* (2008)

Assaf Shatil, piano

*πtood* is a computer-composed piece that gradually expands its harmonic material within a setting of constant rhythmic displacement.

9. *Bossa Nostra* (1981)

*Chief Dave's Major Mojo/Situation Normal, All Funked Up* (medley) (1980)

*Ralph* (1976)

Camellia Boutros, trumpet

Nelsen Hutchison, guitar

Will Henley-Dias, piano

Kumi Maxson, bass

Cory Graves-Montalbano, drums

These jazz tunes were mostly written while Larry was living in New York City and working as a gigging musician.

10. II-V-I (1997)

Giacomo Fiore and Larry Polansky; guitars

This formally-structured but largely improvised duo was originally written for Larry to play with his friend, guitarist Nick Didkovsky. In recent years Giacomo and Larry have performed it extensively, in a wide variety of venues. It requires real-time retuning of the guitars in order to play three harmonic series' based on the progression referenced in the title.

11. *tetherball*

UCSC Experimental Music Ensemble

Annie Blackadar, trombone

Zev Cooper, bassoon

Zade Dardari, voice, accordion

Austin Kowalczyk, trumpet, saw

Vinod Krishnamurthy, guitar

Nick Uhlig, horn

*tetherball* is a large set of pieces, in varying degrees of complexity, intended to be orchestrated by different ensembles in different ways. Tonight, we have decided to turn the first two, the simplest ones, into a celebration of aerophones.

12. *A Few Rounds*

UCSC Experimental Music Ensemble (+ friends)

Since 2005, Larry has composed well over 200 rounds. Watch what you say around him or you might be immortalized in one. We offer a small sampling tonight. You may be asked to sing along.

*detritus haikus* (2012) [performed as an instrumental]

“Thirty-four banana slugs in the Pogonip on April Fool's Day”

*simple question* (2010) [written at the MacDowell Colony,

Peterborough, New Hampshire]

“What time does the bell ring?”

*vii(d)vi (for george marsb)* (2017)

“Happy birthday to you! (and to seventy six more!)”

*Leave logs for frogs!* (2005)

[Text by Sarah Lloyd, from “Leave logs for frogs!,” Central North Field Naturalists Leaflet, 2005, Tasmania, Australia]

“Standing dead trees logs small branches, twigs and leaves provide microhabitats for fungi, mosses, liverworts and lichens . . . habitat and shelter for insects such as lady birds and warm places where skinks can bask.”

[ground bass: “And not only frogs need logs”]

13. *Ensembles of Note* (1998)

UCSC Experimental Music Ensemble (+ friends)

The indeterminate “process piece” *Ensembles of Note* is a good example of a “one-page piece,” which offers a notated rhythmic ostinato and prose instructions for how to realize the piece. It has been a favorite among Experimental Music Ensemble players since 2002.

LARRY POLANSKY taught at Mills College (1981–1990), Dartmouth College (1990–2011; 2012–13), and UC Santa Cruz (2011–12; 2013–2019). We congratulate him on his 38-year teaching career and wish him lots of time for composing rounds and other things in his retirement.

THANKS to the wonderful performers (all 28+ of them!) who contributed to this program, who were so generous with their time, and who added so much joy and creativity to this endeavor. Special thanks also to the Music Department office staff and to Dave Morrison who helped make it happen.

[Program notes are by A. Beal unless otherwise indicated.]