

second and third versions for this concert. This is Beyer's final composition for solo voice and the text is very personal. This work was written in the same month that Henry Cowell, Beyer's close friend with whom she corresponded regularly, was incarcerated at San Quentin State Prison on a "morals" charge.

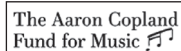
Tonight's performance of the *Movement for Double Bass and Piano* has a chamber ensemble covering all of the parts that would be played by the piano. This was her first composition for solo bass and it precedes the *Movement for String Quartet*, also with bass.

For *Percussion Op. 14*, we adapted the original instrumentation to include a mix of traditional percussion instruments as well as found objects. The original score was for 15 percussionist and was then consolidated into 7 parts. This composition, along with Beyer's other works for percussion were inspired by John Cage establishing a percussion ensemble at the Cornish School. It is unclear as to why there is an Opus title attached to this piece or why that number is 14.

The Federal Music Project is one of Beyer's five choral works and is dedicated to Ashley Pettis, the director of the Composers' Forum-Laboratory. It was composed in the same month as the second string quartet. There is no evidence that this piece was performed within Beyer's lifetime.

Formed in 2013, Southland Ensemble is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the interpretation and performance of experimental music. Co-directed by Christine Tivolacci and Eric KM Clark, the ensemble consists of eight core members and often collaborates with guests as the music requires. Each member of the ensemble is proficient on a least one or more traditional Western instruments, as well as spoken word and found objects—stones, radios, sheet metal, and household items to name a few. The ensemble believes strongly in the power of creative programming to educate and enhance the audience's understanding of an historical or artistic period. Each concert is carefully programmed to reflect a specific creative period in a location or composer's career. Since its formation, the ensemble has presented over 30 concerts, including work by more than 40 composers from around the world. www.southlandensemble.com

Southland Ensemble wishes to thank Automata Arts for their partnership in our current and past seasons. This concert is funded in part by The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc.



AUTOMATA is a Los Angeles nonprofit organization dedicated to the creation, incubation, and presentation of experimental puppet theater, experimental film, and other contemporary art practices centered on ideas of artifice and performing objects. www.automata-la.org

SOUTHLAND ENSEMBLE

presents

Ballad of the Star-Eater: the music of Johanna Beyer

Saturday April 6th, 2019, 8 pm
Automata Arts, Los Angeles

Southland Ensemble performers

Jennifer Bewerse; cello, voice and percussion
Eric KM Clark; violin, voice and percussion
Orin Hildestad; violin, voice and percussion
James Klopffleisch; bass, voice and percussion
Christine Tivolacci; flute, voice and percussion
Cassia Streb; viola, voice and percussion

Guest performers

Stephanie Aston; voice
Argenta Walther; voice and percussion
Brian Walsh; clarinet

Upcoming Concert

Southland Ensemble x Dog Star Orchestra: LAND IMAGES
Friday June 14, 2019, 8 pm
Automata Arts

PROGRAM

Ballad of the Star Eater: the music of Johanna Beyer
All compositions by Johanna Beyer

String Quartet #2 (1936), copied and edited by Pamela Marshall
Koan Quartet

Have Faith (for Ethel Luening), version #3 (1936/37)
Flute, Christine Tavolacci
Soprano, Stephanie Aston

Movement for Double Bass and Piano (1936)
Solo Bass, James Klopffleisch

Ballad of the Star-Eater (1934), copied and edited by Charles Shere
Libretto by Bonaro Wilkinson Overstreet
Mezzo Soprano; Argenta Walther
Bb Clarinet; Brian Walsh

String Quartet IV (likely, 1943, undated)
Koan Quartet

Music of the Spheres (1938)

Movement for String Quartet (1938)

Have Faith (for Ethel Luening); version #2 (1936/37)
Flute, Christine Tavolacci
Soprano, Stephanie Aston

Percussion Op. 14 1939
(copied and edited by Thomas Smetyrns)

The Federal Music Project (1936), copied and edited by Margaret Fisher, with assistance from Lou Harrison

About the composer

Johanna Beyer (1888-1944) was a German-American composer, accompanist and piano teacher who lived and worked in New York city from 1927 until her death. Very little is known about her life before her time in the United States. She was a contemporary of Henry Cowell, Ruth Crawford and Carl Ruggles and is considered by many scholars to be a part of the school of American ultra-modernism. Beyer studied composition with Charles Seeger and Ruth Crawford-Seeger. She also studied under Henry Cowell at the New School. She was an active member of the musical community and contributed a great deal to the political activism and social engagement.

Johanna Beyer died of ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) in 1944 and her work would have gone completely forgotten were it not for the work of numerous composers and performers, and notably Frog Peak, a composers' collective, who brought her music back to life, as it were, through research and volunteer score copying. It is in this same spirit that we are presenting these works this evening with the hopes of bringing this important music to the foreground.

"The Frog Peak/Johanna Beyer Project is a collective effort by Frog Peak composers and friends to issue annotated performance editions of the works of Johanna Beyer. All work on is project is voluntary, and each composer/editor/copyist is given considerable freedom in the choice of editorial style. We hope that these editions will stimulate performance, research, and recording of Beyer's work."

—Frog Peak (Series Editor: Larry Polansky;
Assistant Editors: Paul Schick and Jody Diamond)

About the works

Many of these works were not performed within Beyer's lifetime and as such, there are a couple of "possible premieres" on tonight's program, notably the *String Quartet IV* and the *Movement for String Quartet*. There is no official estate or archive of Beyer's music and as such, premieres and recordings are not reported to one organisation who is compiling this information.

In the manuscript, there are three versions of the song, *Have Faith!*, in threedifferent time signatures. The first and second contain similar compositional material, the first beginning with the flute and the second containing the same material but with an added vocal introduction. The third contains completely different material for both flute and voice, with the text remaining the same in all three versions. We have chosen to present the

(continued overleaf)

LIBRETTO

Ballad of the Star Eater

By Bonaro Wilkinson Overstreet

Hunger assailed me with sharp, cold pain.
I had searched for food, and searched in vain.
I had found no berries, no pulpy root;
and the boughs above me bore no fruit
So I lay in the grass and gnawed a blade
and I can't be sure Perhaps I prayed.
I only know that suddenly
a splendid knowledge came to me
Stars were twinkling overhead
on these I know that I might be fed.
So up I rose with quick, glad cry
and began to scale the wall of the sky
Here was a crevice, there a cleft
so I went climbing right hand then left.
My breath came short, the quick air strong, but I
thought brave songs as I climbed and clung
Below, the horizon stretched and grew
'til the earth spun free in a tide of blue.
Weary and still but fiercely proud
I swung at last to a ledge of cloud
Then stars were around and over me rare,
ripe but on a heaven'ly tree.
I crushed and cracked them and crunched the meat.
Oh, they were rich and spicy sweet!
I crushed and cracked them, and from my hand
the shells slipped down in a meteor band.
When strength flowed through me from toe to
crown,
I left my cloud perch and came on down.
I can still see the skydust on toe and heel where I
dug for footing; and I still can feel the curve of
clouds where I clung to these with gripping fin-
gers and gripping knees...
Now I walk the earth without care,
though roots elude me and boughs are bare.
For stars still prickle my fingertips,
and the taste of stars in warm on my lips.
I fear no hunger with sharp, cold pain...
if it dare assail me I shall climb again.

Have Faith!

By J. M. Beyer

Here is a song a song for you,
oh nightingale!
a song of what!
of hope, of future, present, past?
it does not matter, it does not matter.
But essential is,
that you and I and all the others
have faith in things to come,
in things that passed, and are
and we must try to understand
and love and help each other,
have faith in things to come,
have faith!

Federal Music Project

By J. M. Beyer

I know of an active bee-hive,
it busses [buzzes] and bubbles [sic] all day,
is full of creative ideas,
a nucleus of a future so gay!

To it come all happy children
and adults so young and so old
to find the key to music,
to know of the secrets untold.

It all is taught with knowledge
with love through games and fun.
Unavoidably that may happen
is surely a wonderful thing,

Glad people will breath [sic] in music,
the babies with their milk
and soon we will have creators
of enduring music and skill.

The Federal Music Project,
the bee-hive I'm talking about,
is a remarkable living idea
with a future, oh, so bright!

(continued overleaf)