

Wednesdays@7 presents

Palimpsest
Honoring Mario Davidovsky (1934-2019)
Aleck Karis, Conductor

Wednesday, February 26th, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Flashbacks (1995)

Mario Davidovsky

flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, percussion

Sefarad: Four Spanish-Ladino Folksongs (2004)

Mario Davidovsky

baritone voice, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, percussion
featuring Jonathan Nussman, baritone

Composition for 12 Instruments (1948; revised 1954)

Milton Babbitt

flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, violin, viola, cello, bass, harp, celesta

intermission

Subtle Influx (2019) World Premiere

Yi-Hsien Chen

flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, violin, viola, cello, bass, harp, celesta

Biblical Songs (1990)

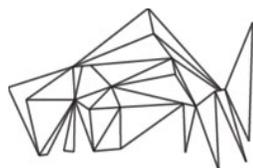
Mario Davidovsky

soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano
featuring Susan Narucki, soprano

Pennplay (1979)

Mario Davidovsky

chamber orchestra



UC San Diego
ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Music

Palimpsest

flute	Teresa Díaz de Cossio Alexander Ishov Michael Matsuno
oboe	Juliana Gaona-Villamizar
clarinet	Ariana Warren Anthony Burr
bassoon	David Savage
french horn	Jane Zwerneman
trumpet	Alexandria Smith
trombone	Berk Schneider
tuba	Bryan Smith
violin	Erik Carlson Ilana Waniuk
viola	Batya MacAdam-Somer
cello	Peter Ko
contrabass	Matthew Kline
piano	Mari Kawamura Ashley Zhang Dimitrios Paganos-Koukakis
percussion	Michael Jones Rebecca Lloyd-Jones

Featuring

Susan Narucki, soprano
Jonathan Nussman, baritone

Aleck Karis, conductor

Production Credits:

Production Coordinator – David J. Espiritu
Theatrical Production Specialist – Jeremy Olson
Production Technicians – Bobby Bray, Mark Geddes, Pablo Ochoa, and Aaron Sum
Recording Engineers – Andrew Munsey & Mike Butler
Recording Assistants – Xochilt Khoury, Christopher Robinson, Jeffrey Xing, Hailey Brown, Mason Davis
122 GSR – Gabriel Zalles
Marketing & Promotions Coordinator – Sherry An
Program Associate – Madison Greenstone

Audience members are reminded to please silence all phones and noise-generating devices before the performance. As a matter of courtesy and copyright law, no unauthorized recording or photography is allowed in the hall. UC San Diego is a non-smoking campus.

CONTACT US

For information on upcoming concerts:

Sefarad: Four Spanish-Ladino Songs

Anonymous texts translated by the composer with assistance of Elaine Davidovsky

I. Celebrating Birth

Canta, gallo canta que quiere amanecer Canta ruiseñor del día que quiere esclarecer	Sing rooster sing dawn wants to break Sing nightingale Day wants to clear
El gallo cantaba al la punta del pino Yo lo manteneré con azúcar y vino	The rooster was singing on the top of the pine tree I will nurture him with sugar and wine
Canta, gallo canta que quiere amanecer Si dormis, parida con bien despertés	Sing, rooster sing dawn wants to break If you sleep mother with riches you will wake
Parida, parida dize, que parites Te parí un hijo con cara de luna	Mother, mother tell me what did you have I gave you a son with a moon for a face
Volved parida la cara al verandado Verés el parido decir “sheheyianu”	Turn your face mother to the veranda you will see your husband saying “sheheyianu”
Ya viene el parido con las manos llenas En una mano trae Manzanas y peras	Here comes the father his hands are full In on hand he brings apples and pears
En otra mano Trae un cirio de candela Cual sean buen “syiman” esta alegría	With the other hand he carries a large candle This jubilation is a good “syiman”
Canta, gallo canta que quiere amanecer Si dormis parida con bien despertés	Sing, rooster sing dawn wants to break If you doze mother with riches you will wake

II. Soldadito, Soldadito

-Soldadito, soldadito? de donde ha venido usted?	-Soldier, dear soldier from where have you come
-De la guerra, señorita Que se le ofrece a usted?	-From the war, young maiden Can I serve you well?
-Ha visto usted a mi marido en la guerra alguna vez?	-Have you seen my husband ever, during the war?
-No señora no lo he visto Ni se las señas de el	-No I did not see him my lady Neither his looks I know
-Mi marido es alto, rubio Alto rubio aragones Y en la punta de su lanza Lleva un pañuelo borde Se lo borde siendo niño Siendo niña lo borde Otro que le estoy bordando y otro que le bordaré	-My husband is tall and blond Tall, blond and from Aragon And by the tip of his lance He displays an embroidered cloth I embroidered it when a girl and another I did A new one I am embroidering and yet another one I will
-Por las señas que usted hadado Su marido muerto es Lo velaron en Zaragoza en casa de un Coronel	-By the signs you have given me Your husband is no more They held the wake in Zaragoza at the Colonel's home
-Siete años lo he esperado otros siete esperaré Si a los catorce no viene de monjite me metere	-Seven years I have waited and another seven I will wait If at fourteen I don't see him a nunnery I will join
-Calla, calla Isabelita Calla, calla Isabel Yo soy tu querido esposo Tu mi querida mujer	-Quiet, quiet Isabelita Quiet, quiet Isabel I am your dear husband You are my beloved wife

III. This mountain in front

Esta montaña d'enfrente S'aciende y va quemando Allí perdí al mi amor M'asento y vo llorando	This mountain in front catches fire and is burning There I lost my love Seated, I am weeping
Arvolito de menekhse Yo lo ensembrí en mi huerto Yo lo crecí y lo engrandecí Otros s'estan gozando	Flowering little tree which I planted in my garden I nurtured it and made it flourish Now it gives pleasure to others
Secretos quero descubrir Secretos de mi vida El cielo quiero por papel La mar quiero por tinta	Secrets I wish to disclose Secrets of my life The sky I want for paper The sea I want for ink
Arvoles por péndola Para 'scrivir mis males No hoy quien sepa mi dolo Ni ajenos ni parientes	The trees for feather pen My ills to describe No one knows my sorrow Neither strangers or kin

IV. Moxé suvio laxamayim

Moxé suvio laxamayim sin akhila y sin mayim Trajanos luhot xenayim que enpeçan con “Anokhi”	Moses went up to the heavans without food and without water He brought us Two Tablets that begin with “I am”
Al sinyi vino a relumbrar con beraquím y con xofar A Israel hizo temblar con el que dijo “Anokhi”	He came to lighten up the Sinai with thunderbolts and “shofar” Israel trembled with He who said “I am”
Nos dió aseret hadiberot con sus dinim y sus mitzvot Alli estaban las nexamot cuad Dios dijo “Anokhi”	He gave us ten commandments with its laws and good deeds There, the souls gathered when God said “I am”
Los muertos resucitaran Todos alegres estaran A Yerusalaim retornaran con el que dijo “Anokhi”	The dead will rise The people joyful will be To Jerusalem they will return with He who said “I am”
Adonenu elohanu bora et Moxé rabenu para damos Toratenu que principia con “Anokhi”	Our God, our Lord created Moses our teacher to give us the Law that begins with “I am”

Composition for Twelve Instruments – Milton Babbitt

Milton Babbitt’s *Composition for Twelve Instruments*, written in 1948, is a twelve-tone piece in that it is constructed from a series of aggregates (an aggregate is a collection of all 12 unique pitches in a chromatic scale). However, Babbitt’s methods are vastly more intricate than the twelve-tone works that came before him. He put great effort into maximizing the connections and relationships between every event in the score.

For example, the note that begins the piece, a G in the harp, is the first note of an aggregate consisting of the first twelve notes of the piece. But it is also the first note of an aggregate made of the first twelve notes that the harp itself plays, which is revealed at a much slower rate. It is also the first note of an aggregate comprising the first six notes of the harp paired with the first six notes of the harp’s companion instrument, the celesta. It is the first note of a fourth aggregate made from the first three notes each of the harp, the celesta, the horn, and the trumpet. And it is the first note of an aggregate consisting of the first two notes each of the harp, celesta, violin, viola, cello, and bass.

A similar list of overlapping collections and patterns can be made for every single note of the piece, creating a spectacular web of relationships that might remind one of an elaborate crystal. Added to that, and building on his earlier works, Babbitt applied these ideas not only to pitches, but also to durations, dynamics, and timbre, adding whole dimensions of connections between each moment of the piece.

Composition for Twelve Instruments is around 8 minutes long.

Subtle Influx – Yi-Hsien Chen

I'm always inspired by Wai-lim Yip, a bilingual poet, when I compose. He proposes that the words in a poem constantly interact and echo with other voices in the past and our aesthetic consciousness, creating a double image when we read it. In *Diffusion of Distances*, he says "these other voices bring about changes, like a huge symphony playing inaudibly to our inner ear, converging into a confluent dense music."

This inner dialogue between reader and poet also strongly resonates with me as a composer. As I listen to Nanguan music, a Chinese classical ensemble comprised of one singer and several instrumentalists, the color of voice, melody, and lyric altogether flow into my mind interweaving and echoing with my aesthetic experience. Each syllable of lyric in Nanguan plays an important role in providing unique sonic gesture to rich melodic lines. The lyric not only conveys its meaning, but also contains rich timbral motives, allowing the singer to interact with other instrumentalists in a heterophonic way. For me, this beautiful sonic network echoes with my musical imagination. *Subtle Influx* is the piece I created to explore the aural experience about how this ancient music comes into my inner ear to reawaken a conversation between my voice and the voice in the past.

Biblical Songs – Mario Davidovksy

I. From the Song of Songs

Come my beloved
let us go into the field
let us lodge in the villages.
Let us get up early to the vineyards
Let us see if the vine has flowered
whether the tender grape appear
if the pomegranates are in bloom
there will I give my love to you.
The mandrakes yield a fragrance
and at our gates are all manner
of pleasant fruits, new and old,
which I have kept, my beloved, for you.
Make haste
Swift as a gazelle
or a young hart
to the hills of spices.

II. And Samson said,

With the jaw bone of an ass
heaps upon heaps
With the jawbone of an ass
have I slain a thousand men.

III. Psalm 137

By the rivers of Babylon
There we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.
On the willows we hanged our harps
For there they that carried us away captive
Asked us for a song:
Our tormentors, for amusement.
How shall we sing the Lord's song
in a strange land,
IM ESHKAJEJ IERUSHALAIM
TISHKAJ IEMINI.
TIDBAK LESHONI LEJIKI IM LO EZKEREJI
IM LO AALE ET IERUSHALAIM AL ROSH SIMJATI.
Remember O lord the Children of Edóm,
the day of Jerusalem's fall
how they cried. Rase it Rase it to her very foundation.
O daughter of Babylon, who has to be destroyed.
Happy shall he be, that rewards you, as you have served us,
Blessed shall he be,
that takes and dashes your children
against the rocks.

IV. Isaac's Blessing

See... Ah... the smell of my son
is like the smell of the fields
which the Lord has blessed.
Therefore,
God give you the dew of heaven
and the fatness of the earth
and plenty of corn and wine!
Let the people serve you
and Nations bow down to you
Be the Lord over your brothers
and let your mother's sons
bow down to you
Cursed be they who curse you
and blessed be they who bless you
Ah... the smell of my son
is like the smell of the fields...

About the performers

Soprano **Susan Narucki** has been an advocate for the music of our time for over thirty years. She worked closely with the late Mario Davidovsky, presenting the world premiere performances and recordings of the composer's *Shulamit's Dream* (with the San Francisco Symphony) and *Cancione Sine Textu*. In addition, the soprano has recorded Davidovsky's *Biblical Songs*, *Romancero* and his masterwork for vocal ensemble, *Shir-ha-shirim*, all on Bridge Records. Ms. Narucki's most recent recording of vocal works of György Kurtág was nominated for a 2020 Grammy in the Best Classical Vocal Album. She is a Professor of Music at UC San Diego.

Aleck Karis had an association with Mario Davidovsky going back to the late 70's. He played most of Davidovsky's ensemble music with New York groups like Speculum Musicae, The Group for Contemporary Music, The New Music Consort, The League-ISCM Concerts, and Parnassus. *Synchronisms No. 6*, Davidovsky's Pulitzer Prize-winning work for piano and tape, became a signature work which he performed dozens of times in Europe, Asia and the Americas, and recorded twice. He also spent numerous summers at the Composers' Conference at Wellesley College, which was directed by Davidovsky. In addition to *Synchronisms No. 6*, he recorded Davidovsky's *Chaconna* and *Duo Capriccioso*, both with Bridge. His most recent recording on Bridge Records features Debussy's complete *Études* and *Children's Corner*. Karis came to UC San Diego in 1990 and is presently a distinguished professor of music.

Jonathan Nussman is a baritone whose varied interests include opera, theater, and chamber music, with a special emphasis on works from the 20th and 21st centuries. Appearances include San Diego Opera, Opera Boston, Guerilla Opera, Juventas New Music Ensemble, Cape Cod Opera, the Cambridge Symphony Orchestra, Bodhi Tree Concerts, Project [BLANK], the La Jolla Symphony and soundSCAPE New Music Festival. As a performer of contemporary and experimental music, he frequently premieres pieces by composers from around the world, as well as his own original compositions.

In addition to originating prominent roles in over twenty world-premiere operas and theatrical works, he has performed extensively in more traditional repertoire, with notable roles including Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Larry Foreman (*The Cradle Will Rock*), and Sid (*Albert Herring*). He is originally from Charlotte, North Carolina, and is currently a candidate for a doctoral degree in contemporary vocal performance at UC San Diego.

About Mario Davidovsky

This concert honors Mario Davidovsky, who died on August 23, 2019, at the age of 85. Hugely influential as a teacher, at Columbia University and later Harvard, Davidovsky created a body of work notable for its exquisite attention to detail, lyricism, originality, and mastery of color. He was acclaimed for his ground-breaking work combining acoustic instruments with electronic sounds, his series of "Synchronisms", beginning with the *No. 1* for flute in 1962 and ending with *No. 12* for clarinet in 2006. *Synchronisms No. 6*, for piano, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1971. Davidovsky was born in Médanos, Argentina in 1934 to Jewish parents who had emigrated from Eastern Europe. In 1958 he came to Tanglewood at the invitation of Aaron Copland, where he met Milton Babbitt just as he was about to form the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center. Davidovsky came to New York to work at the center in 1960. He lived on the upper West Side of New York for most of his life, and directed the Electronic Music Center from 1981 to 1994. Davidovsky, a man of great personal warmth, became close friends with many of the performers who played his music in New York's many contemporary music groups. He wrote no operas and very little for orchestra, but produced a steady output of music for mixed ensembles, string quartet, and soloists, all of consistently high quality. His vocal writing often drew on Old Testament texts.

In the early 60's, electronic music was very much made by hand and involved splicing together hundreds, or thousands of bits of recorded tape. Describing his early work in the studio, he said:

Esthetically speaking, I always enjoyed the challenge of being left in the desert for a few days with a knife and a gallon of water. I thought it would be important to try to do the opposite of what came naturally to me. Before working with electronic sounds, I had been writing large, ambitious, lyrical works in the manner of Alban Berg. I treated electronic music as my nemesis, and all of us in the studio at that time were trying to find and create a musical logic and continuity between sounds that were totally unfamiliar to us. When I returned to instrumental ensembles without electronic tape after almost five years of experience in the studio, I discovered that my writing had obtained what I like to think of as a new leanness, clarity, simplicity and refinement.

In a 1994 interview with Perry Goldstein, Davidovsky described his struggle to reconcile his own heritage with his deep love of the music of Palestrina, Bach, Mozart and Beethoven: “spiritual and redemptive works, luminous forms of intelligence that totally affect the mind and the senses.” He continued:

At a particularly difficult time in my life, I realized that I was uncomfortable because I am a Jewish man in profound love with and practicing what is probably the most glorious product of Christianity,” he says. “Then I understood, not only in my mind but in my guts, that the processes involved in creating polyphony and, in consequence, Western art music were not all that different from the processes that unfold in Talmudic thinking. Music and the Jewish Talmud are different, but somehow the imagination and intellectual procedures are very similar. I had to be in a great state of disarray to hit upon this, but I felt totally happy and absolved within myself when I did. The idea of polyphony as something that should redeem you survived even after the Church lost its greatest power. Music became more than an object of art. It became an act of faith, representative of the highest human achievement. As a composer, you had the wishful thought that you were doing something to make somebody better.

After hearing one of Davidovsky’s early works with electronics, Karlheinz Stockhausen remarked, “I feel that after hearing this piece I am no longer the same person as before”. It is our hope that listeners will feel the same way after hearing the works presented this evening.

~Aleck Karis

Spotlight on:

Wednesdays@7 presents
Susan Narucki: *suddenly drenched with dawn*
Wednesday March 4th, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

About the concert

Soprano Susan Narucki will present an evening of music that celebrates the human voice at its most intimate, lyrical and exuberant. The recital takes place at UC San Diego Department of Music’s Conrad Prebys Concert Hall on March 4, 2020 at 7 p.m. Narucki, will be joined by guest artists Aleck Karis (piano), Pablo Gomez (guitar), Kirsten Ashley Wiest (soprano) Teresa Díaz de Cossio (flute) and Sean Dowgray (percussion).

The concert includes two distinctive works of modern vocal chamber music: Kaija Saariaho’s *Adjö* for voice, flute and guitar and Karin Rehnqvist’s *Puksånger/Lockrop* for two voices and percussion. Saariaho’s work is an exquisite setting of Solveig von Schoultz’s poem celebrating the return of the sun after months of darkness; Rehnqvist’s extended work incorporates Finnish proverbs about women, and traditional folk texts, and utilizes a traditional (and spectacular) vocal “herding-call” technique.

Two elegiac works for voice and guitar are included on the program: Hosokawa’s *Renka I* and songs by the English composer John Dowland. Both works speak to parting and loss through unique and elegant compositional styles separated by centuries.

Francis Poulenc’s lyrical masterwork for voice and piano, *Tel Jour, Telle Nuit*, is the other connecting thread of the program. Composed in 1937 with texts by surrealist poet Paul Éluard, the cycle of nine songs traverses a landscape of the unusual and beautiful, describing a journey less to a specific destination than to a place within, suddenly drenched with dawn.

Susan Narucki is a Professor of Music at UC San Diego and leads the Arts and Community Engagement Initiative for the Division of Arts and Humanities. Her most recent recording “The Edge of Silence: Vocal Chamber Music of György Kurtág” has been nominated for a 2020 Grammy Award as Best Classical Vocal Album.