WEDS@7 presents
Susan Narucki & Friends
An evening of vocal chamber music

Wednesday, November 4, 2026 - 7 p.m.
Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Cassandra (2026) — Adam Greene

Susan Narucki, soprano
Leanna Keith, flute
Robbie Bui, cello

World Premiere

- Intermission -

TRINOS (2024) — Alba Potes

Susan Narucki and Kirsten Ashley Weist, sopranos

Four songs — Clara Schumann

Ich stand in dunklen Träumen
Warum willst du And're fragen
Liebeszauber
Die stille Lotosblume

Susan Narucki, soprano
Kyle Adam Blair, piano

Program/Bios

Cassandra is a setting of Cassandra's famous mad scene in *Agamemnon*, by Aeschylus. Cassandra was the Trojan princess and priestess of Apollo who was doomed to tell prophecies that would not be believed or understood. Over the course of this work, the protagonist receives terrifying premonitions of the violent deeds planned by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus that will eventually claim her life. She is consumed by the overwhelming losses she has endured and wonders how this could be her fate and that of her family's despite their devotion to the gods. In defiance, she throws down her vestments and rejects Apollo, who has abandoned her. Before she is led to her doom, she makes a plea to be avenged before lamenting the state of humanity, where lives are so fragile and impermanent that "one stroke of a wet sponge wipes all the picture out."

The libretto uses texts both from English translations and the original Greek. Aeschylus's writing features richly poetic language that can be extremely pungent at times, shifting suddenly to a more ethereal voice expressing philosophical concerns. The text is saturated with references to Greco-Roman myth, even as there are chilling connections with our current circumstance. By eliminating all other roles from the original drama, the libretto keeps matters focused on the character of Cassandra. There is really nothing "mad" about this Cassandra, of course. Not only does she tell the truth, that truth is terrifying.

- Adam Greene

I became fascinated by vocal chamber music toward the beginning of my studies, over forty years ago now, by the seemingly endless possibilities for expression, both musical and emotional, that could be evinced from small forces. It is a great pleasure to be immersed in such fine gradations of detail, to listen and respond, to experience a weaving together of imaginations; the composers', the poets', the performers' and my own - and to create a unique performance to be shared only once, with you, the audience.

It is a privilege to bring these works to life this evening. I am grateful to Adam Greene for his marvelous *Cassandra,* a work that is timely and powerful, an extraordinary and satisfying challenge. I am deeply appreciative of the expertise and dedication of Leanna Keith and Robbie Bui, who took time out of their demanding schedules to prepare *Cassandra* with me.

My dear colleague and friend, the excellent Kirsten Ashley Wiest joins me to reprise Alba Potes' haunting *TRINOS* (2024) from our ongoing project, *New Music for Two Voices*, commissioning and performing new works for two acapella voices. I am very proud of our first recording, released on New Focus in August 2026, which will be the first of more to come.

Finally, I thank Kyle Adam Blair for his ever wondrous playing, as we end the concert with four songs by Clara Schumann. Making music with friends is one of life's great joys and I am so pleased to share my joy with you.

- Susan Narucki

Biographies

Adam Greene (b. 1970) is a composer whose work references interests in literature, linguistics, and cognitive science in music that explores multiplicity, fragility, and instability, often through intensive examination of instrumental practice. His work has been described as "an evanescent soundscape" (*San Diego Story*) with "textures and the quasi-metaphorical ideas that animate them (that) are striking and new" (*The San Diego Union-Tribune*). He has received grants and awards from The Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard, ASCAP, NACUSA, The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI), The American Music Center, and The American Composers Forum. His music has been played by the San Diego Symphony, SONOR, NOISE Ensemble, the Formalist Quartet, Speculum Musicae, and Ensemble Resonanz. He has been awarded fellowships to festivals and residency programs that have featured his works, such as UCROSS, ACO EarShot, the soundON Festival and the International Ferienkurse für Neue Musik (Darmstadt) and the Composers Conference at Wellesley. Born in Chicago and raised in New England, he now lives in San Diego with his wife, the artist Stacie Birky Green

Alba Potes (Alba Lucía Potes Cortés) (Colombia-USA) was born in Cali, Colombia, and moved to the USA in 1983. She began composing music in 1990 and has established a career as a composer with a subtle, yet energetic and personal style. In her music, one notes rich European influences blended with occasional traces of rhythms and melodic gestures inspired by Latin-American traditional music. Ms. Potes is the Founder of the music series Las Américas en Concierto and served as the Artistic Director from 2012 to 2024. Recently, her composition, ***Cantos Escondidos*** (*Hidden Songs*) was the winner of the **Concurso Latinoamericano de Composición "Antonio María Valencia" Mujeres que dejan huella en el arte** (Women that Leave a Mark on the Arts), Bellas Artes, Institución Universitaria del Valle, Colombia, December, 2021.

A freelance flutist, artist, improviser, and composer from Seattle, **Leanna Keith** (she/they) delights in creating sound experiences that make audiences laugh, cry, and say: "I didn't know the flute could do that!" Their works focus on timbre-shifting, the mixed-race experience, queer theory, and the breaking of genre boundaries. Leanna is obsessed with conduction, butoh, taiko drumming, circus arts, and the limitless capacity of humanism in sound creation. She is dedicated to playing music by living composers, and advocates for the usage of music as social activism. Leanna is currently pursuing their doctorate in contemporary flute performance at the University of California San Diego.

Robbie Bui is recognized principally as a contemporary cellist, but his creative life encompasses being a composer, collaborative pianist, pop violinist, multimedia artist, portrait photographer, nonprofit arts administrator, and even once a bad piccolo player. He holds a Bachelor of Music with Honors from New England Conservatory in composition, and a Master of Arts and Doctor of Musical Arts in contemporary performance from UC San Diego. Through this mixed interdisciplinary background, he merges a deep theoretical understanding of musical construction, performance expressivity among multiple instruments, and digital media art into one collaborative artistic identity. He has been dedicated dozens of new pieces as a soloist and chamber musician. Robbie currently plays in East Coast

Contemporary Ensemble (ECCE), Palimpsest Ensemble, and Alinéa. You can find him playing regularly in Boston and New York City, and anywhere and wherever he is needed throughout his home base in San Diego.

Award-winning coloratura soprano **Kirsten Ashley Wiest** is celebrated for her "extraordinary performance virtuosity" and "impressive range and power" (*Sequenza21*), which captivate audiences and composers across the globe. A passionate advocate for the evolution of classical vocal music, she has premiered more than 100 new works spanning operatic roles, chamber music, monodramas, art songs, and a cappella repertoire. Her artistry is defined by a fearless commitment to expanding the boundaries of vocal expression and collaborating closely with today's most innovative performers and composers. Kirsten has appeared with leading ensembles and institutions including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Diego Symphony, PARTCH ensemble, wild Up, and The Industry, among many others dedicated to advancing contemporary music. Her performances are noted for their technical brilliance, emotional depth, and versatility across a wide range of styles and demands. Kirsten holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from California Institute of the Arts and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from University of California San Diego where she studied with soprano Susan Narucki. Alongside performing, Kirsten also teaches voice at the university level and serves on the Board of Directors for several nonprofit organizations. *kirstenashleywiest.com*

Lyricism, complexity, and dissonance characterize the musical interests of pianist **Kyle Adam Blair**. A contemporary music specialist, his major pianistic focuses include the performance of new works in collaboration with composers, and the performance of works from the American art music repertory of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, particularly music of Elliott Carter, Aaron Copland, George Crumb, and Stuart Saunders Smith. Blair's solo piano debut album ***Palm Sunday*** can be heard on New World Records . A well-traveled performer, he has shared the stage with Susan Narucki, Steven Schick, John-Andrew Morrison, Bang-On-A-Can All-Stars, the Mark Morris Dance Group, and members of Eighth Blackbird. He received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Contemporary Music Performance from the University of California San Diego in 2018 under the mentorship of Aleck Karis.

American soprano **Susan Narucki** has forged a unique path; her dedication to the music of our time has led to critically acclaimed performances with musicians of the first rank and close collaborations with generations of composers. She has appeared with the Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Netherlands Opera, San Francisco Symphony and numerous appearances at Carnegie Hall. Her long-standing relationship with the ASKO/Schoenberg Ensemble led to iconic recordings and performances of works of Louis Andriessen and Claude Vivier. She was a featured soloist on the GRAMMY Award winning recording of George Crumb's Star-Child (2000) and earned three GRAMMY Nominations for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album: *Elliott Carter: Tempo e Tempi* (2002, Bridge Records), *The Edge of Silence: Vocal Music of Kurtág* (2020, AVIE), and most recently, a 2026 nomination for *Kurtág: Kafka Fragments* with violinist Curtis Macomber (AVIE). She serves as Distinguished Professor of Music at UC San Diego.

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.

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