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# MUSIC OF TODAY

## The Music of Harry Partch (1901-1974)

with

THE UW HARRY PARTCH ENSEMBLE

Charles Corey, director

Memmi Ochi, assistant

Tuesday, April 26, 2016  
7:30 pm – Meany Theater

## PROGRAM CD # 17,474

- 1 Barstow (1941, 1968) ..... 10:13 ..... Text collected by Harry Partch  
 Jeff Bowen, *Bass-Baritone*  
 Paul Hansen, *Baritone*  
 Marcin Pączkowski, *Surrogate Kithara*  
 Anna Stachurska, *Chromelodeon I*  
 Isaac Anderson, *Diamond Marimba*  
 Matt Grady, *Boo II*
- from Eleven Intrusions (1949-1950)
- 2 VI. The Wind ..... 1:35 ..... Texts by Ella Young and Lao-Tse
- 3 VII. The Street ..... 2:36 ..... Text by Willard Motley  
 Charles Corey, *Baritone, Harmonic Canon II*  
 Melia Watras, *Bass Marimba*
- 4 San Francisco (1943, 1955) ..... 3:28 ..... Text collected by Harry Partch  
 Charles Corey, *Baritone*  
 Rose Bellini, *Cello*  
 Jeff Bowen, *Kithara II*  
 Zack Myers, *Chromelodeon I*
- from Eleven Intrusions (1949-1950)
- 5 VIII. Lover ..... 2:21 ..... Text by George Leite  
 Patrick Perkins, *Baritone*  
 Charles Corey, *Adapted Guitar I*  
 Luke Fitzpatrick, *Adapted Guitar II*  
 Leanna Keith, *Bass Marimba*  
 Lisa Mansfield, *Cloud-Chamber Bowls, Soprano*
- 6 IX. Soldiers - War - Another War ..... 2:18 ..... Texts by Giuseppe Ungaretti  
 trans. William Fense Weaver  
 Patrick Perkins, *Baritone*  
 Charles Corey, *Adapted Guitar I*  
 Leanna Keith, *Harmonic Canon II*  
 Luke Fitzpatrick, *Diamond Marimba*  
 Brad Sherman, *Bass Marimba*  
 Lisa Mansfield, *Cloud-Chamber Bowls*

- 7 The Letter (1943, 1955) ..... 2:59 ..... Text collected by Harry Partch  
Patrick Perkins, *Baritone, Diamond Marimba*  
Anna Stachurska, *Harmonic Canon III*  
Zack Myers, *Kithara II*  
Charles Corey, *Surrogate Kithara*  
Brad Sherman, *Bass Marimba*

## INTERMISSION

from *And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma* (1963-1966)

- 8 Verse 9 1:05  
Charles Corey, *Harmonic Canon I*  
Greg Sinibaldi, *Kithara I*
- 9 Verse 10 1:03  
Memmi Ochi, *Diamond Marimba*  
Paul Hansen, *Boo II*
- 10 Verse 17 1:03  
Patrick Perkins, *Adapted Guitar II*  
Charles Corey, *Mazda Marimba*
- 11 Verse 15 1:22  
Greg Sinibaldi, *Kithara I*  
Huck Hodge, *Chromelodeon I*
- 12 Verse 13 1:05  
Charles Corey, *Harmonic Canon I*  
Brad Sherman, *Cloud-Chamber Bowls*

- 4 from Seventeen Lyrics by Li Po (1930 - 1933).....Text by Li Po  
 13 VII. The Night of Sorrow 2:02 trans. Shigeyoshi Obata  
 14 XIV. A Midnight Farewell 1:53  
 Luke Fitzpatrick, *Baritone, Adapted Viola*

- 15 Daphne of the Dunes (1967) 18:11  
 Marcin Pačzkowski, *Adapted Viola, Gourd Tree, Cone Gongs, Pre-recorded Tape*  
 Anna Stachurska, *Harmonic Canon II, Harmonic Canon III, Spoils of War*  
 Sarah Kolat, *Harmonic Canon II, Chromelodeon I*  
 Kaley Eaton, *Kithara II, Surrogate Kithara*  
 Declan Sullivan, *Diamond Marimba*  
 Matt Grady, *Bass Marimba, Kithara II, Surrogate Kithara*  
 Isaac Anderson, *Boo II, Spoils of War*  
 Paul Hansen, *Cloud-Chamber Bowls*

## Program Notes

I vividly remember the first time I heard the sounds of the Harry Partch Instrument Collection. There was a newness to the whole thing—a visual, textual, and aural world of music making of which I could never dream. I wrote an article about that very experience: “New can be unsettling; it can be exciting, weird, or fascinating. New can even be familiar. And sometimes, new is all these things. The stage would have been at home in Wonderland... a bright blue backdrop loomed from floor to ceiling, lighting a series of child-like instruments—a giant marimba, a zither with red glass music holders, and a gong stand with bells of floating crystal. At once imposing and welcoming, these instruments by American composer and inventor Harry Partch provided the impetus for an evening where new became delightful.” My fascination and affection for these instruments were instantaneous, and they have now become a very special part of the Seattle musical community—reliable, roughhewn, and familiar. For who amongst us performers has not spent a day humming a particularly catchy melody from rehearsal, found ourselves improvising a favorite pop tune on the Diamond Marimba, or taking a dance break to a 31/16 rhythmic figure? This program note may strike you as odd. Aren't you going to tell us how to listen to this music? No. Why are these notes so personal? Because as a part of this community, I would be amiss to ignore the communal aspects of the Harry Partch Instrument Collection and Partch's music.

Born in 1901 in Oakland, California, Harry Partch began working in the wood shop with his father at an early age. A composer, theorist, instrument builder, and performer, Partch's legacy is realized through

his instrument collection. His music implements an alternative to the equalized-tempered system which dominates Western art music. The tuning system—'monophony'—utilizes upwards of 43 tones to the octave, a system not limited by the capabilities of Western instruments. His curiosity, imagination, and woodworking skills gave him the foundation to create his instrument collection. Each work utilizes a set of pitches from the system, exploring modality inspired by Ancient music, the music of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Partch was also committed to making a "ritual" of concert going. He felt that the concert system—including symphonic, electronic, and theatrical works—had "gotten a long way from the purpose" of making and experiencing music. His music is inherently theatrical and interesting to not only experience aurally, but visually as well. Pragmatic issues surround Partch's music, forcing the ensemble to become a community. The difficulty of the music demands a great deal of rehearsal time from the ensemble; the limited access to the instruments requires ensemble members to work closely together. But this was the type of music making that excited Partch.

His first instrument, the Adapted Viola, is featured on the early work *Seventeen Lyrics by Li Po* (1930-1931). This work is an early instance of Partch's "intoning voice," a type of vocalization which mimics the inflections of a dynamic speaking voice—a hybrid of singing and speaking. The two selections, "The Night of Sorrow" and "A Midnight Farewell," are for a single performer on both Adapted Viola and voice.

If a single work personified the communal aspect of Partch's music, *The Wayward* would be a contender. Composed between 1941-1943, the four-work cycle includes music inspired by and sourced from those whom society usually disregards: hitchhikers in *Barstow*, newsboys in *San Francisco*, and the hobos in *The Letter* and *U.S. Highball*. By giving voice to those who are often marginalized, Partch revealed the type of community he was interested in building—an inclusionary community, free from the preconceived biases of "acceptable society" and concert culture. In the three selections performed this evening, "objective" and "subjective" voices will guide the listener through the loose narrative of inscriptions and personal accounts from the subjects, with mixed ensembles.

*Eleven Intrusions* (1938-1950) consists of two instrumental movements and nine vocal moments, with texts from an eclectic selection of poetry and prose. The four selections this evening, "The Wind," "The Street," "Lover," and "Soldiers, War, Another War," utilize the instrument collection to give a soundscape for the texts. Text painting is abundant. *And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma* (1963-66) is a 34-verse work, with duets, trios, and mixed ensemble. The impetus for such a work may have come from Partch's need build a community of dedicated players. Though each movement is short, they are quite difficult, filled with timbral and rhythmic variety. As such, this work serves as a great introduction to the sounds of the instrument collection.

*Daphne of the Dunes* (1967) is a collaborative work, combining film, dance, and music. In 1957, Partch met avant-garde filmmaker Madeline Tourtelot to discuss collaborating on a film. Seeing footage of the Indiana Dunes on Lake Michigan, Partch was inspired by the myth of Daphne and Apollo. Partch wrote,

“the eroding sand is female, the snakes wriggling up the sand male. The waving grasses female, the gulls flying overhead male.” This idea is realized musically, with the percussion instruments symbolizing Apollo, while the string instruments, including a lyrical Adapted Viola, symbolize Daphne. The original composition was recorded entirely by Partch for the film *Windsong* (1958).

To experience Partch is to enter a world of drama, whimsy, and familiarity. From the ingenuity of his instruments and unwillingness to compromise or bow to Western music conventions, to his renegade spirit in approaching concert culture, Harry Partch exemplifies American music-making in the twentieth century. Partch’s music and his instruments are part of a community. From the performers to the audience members, caretakers to engravers, Partch’s music is a labor of love. If this is your first time experiencing these instruments, welcome. For those who have followed the Harry Partch Instrument Collection for years, welcome back. We are happy to have you all as part of our musical community.

-Sarah Kolat

Partch’s book, *Genesis of a Music*, is seminal to understanding the theory behind his tuning system and instruments. For more information, including musical texts and instrument photos, please visit [www.harrypartch.com](http://www.harrypartch.com)



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