

# The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

and

## Sounds Modern

present

### ***Surreal Rhythms:***

*music to celebrate Surrealism and Us*

Saturday, June 29, 2024, 2:00 pm  
Modern Art Museum Auditorium

### **Program**

***Quimbombó*** (2010) by Angélica Negrón (b. 1981)

***A Tres Voces*** (2012) by Tania León (b. 1943)

***Stay on It*** (1973) by Julius Eastman (1940-1990)

### **Musicians**

Sarah Ruth Alexander, voice

Mike Capone, viola

Mia Detwiler, violin

Matthew Frerck, double bass

Stephen Lucas, piano

Andrew May, violin (Sounds Modern assistant director)

Elizabeth McNutt, flute (Sounds Modern director)

Mel Mobley, percussion

Kourtney Newton, cello

Patrick Overturf, percussion

Kory Reeder, double bass

## Notes

Inspired by the vibrant transcultural fusion of the Modern's exhibition *Surrealism and Us*, Sounds Modern presents three works that weave Afro-Caribbean and European musical threads together into new and vivid tapestries of sound.

### Angélica Negrón, *Quimbombó*

Recent Dallas Symphony composer-in-residence, Puerto Rican-born composer and multi-instrumentalist **Angélica Negrón** writes music for accordions, robotic instruments, toys, and electronics as well as for chamber ensembles, orchestras, choir, and film. "**Quimbombó** evokes distant personal memories through a festive and celebratory perspective presenting and deconstructing different rhythms and melodic gestures from the Afro-Caribbean tradition of Puerto Rico. The title *Quimbombó* makes reference to the Puerto Rican stewed okra dish (introduced to Puerto Rican cooking by enslaved Africans) and also serves as an onomatopoeic reference to a distinctive rhythmic pattern persistently used in the composition. The work explores the percussive possibilities of the melodic instruments of the ensemble as well as the voices of the performers as an extension of their playing and as a direct reference to the vocal gestures of the dancers in the performance of *bamba*, which articulate the spiritual significance of this dance. The piece is dedicated and written for Cadillac Moon Ensemble." - Angélica Negrón

### Tania León, *A Tres Voces*

World-renowned Afro-Latina composer, conductor, and educator **Tania León** was born in Havana, Cuba; in her long and illustrious career she has composed for nearly every classical genre. Her music is colorful, complex and substantial, with elements of jazz, gospel music, and Latin styles. She has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize (2021) and a Kennedy Center award (2022). She is currently composer-in-residence at the London Symphony and is the Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall. In León's *A Tres Voces* (2012) for violin, viola, and cello, the three instruments seek unity amid dissonance and disconnection. Wisps of Latin rhythms are nestled within expressionist dialogue and avant-garde instrument writing.

### Julius Eastman, *Stay On It*

**Julius Eastman** was an outspokenly gay Black pianist, vocalist, and composer, born in New York City and raised in Ithaca. Since 2000, and largely owing to the tireless research of composer Mary Jane Leach, his music has enjoyed a resurgence of interest and performances – long after his untimely death in poverty and obscurity. Eastman studied piano at the Curtis Institute before switching his major to composition; in the early 1970's he joined the University of Buffalo's Creative Associates and co-founded the S.E.M. Ensemble. As a singer he is well known for his 1973 Nonesuch recording of Peter Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King*.

*Stay On It* explores individual expression in community, driven by the intensity of a Cuban *son clave* rhythm. Composed for the Creative Associates, the work was part of their touring repertoire. One of their performances has been released on recording; however, like much of Eastman's scores, the written music of *Stay On It* has been lost. G. Schirmer has published a score of *Stay On It*, a reconstruction based on Cornelius Dufallo and Chris MacIntyre's score of the piece for the ISSUE Project Room. Their score, in turn, was based on the recording of the Creative Associates' 1973 performance and conversations with musicians in the Creative Associates and the S.E.M. Ensemble. For this performance, Sounds Modern created a new score based on analysis of the published recording and a video document of the Creative Associates' Glasgow, Scotland performance, as well as Dufallo and MacIntyre's score and Matthew Mendez's excellent article about the piece.

Introducing the work in Glasgow, Eastman told the audience he was interested in "bringing the beat into the concert hall." In *Stay On It*, he said his goal was to let the group do what they do best: listen and respond to each other in the moment. This was central to Eastman's aesthetic; many of his scores were indeterminate, providing materials and structures for interpretation and improvisation. At the time he wrote *Stay On It*, Eastman had lately performed in Terry Riley's *In Cand* and worked with Frederic Rzewski in performances of *Coming Together* and *Les Moutons de Panurge* (Sounds Modern has presented all three of these works, as well as Eastman's *Joy Boy*). The cellular organization and structured repetition, transformation and disintegration of musical material in *Stay On It* show the influence of these foundational works of American minimalism, filtered through the lens of Eastman's uniquely Dionysian, subversive, and joyous perspective.

Eastman wrote a poem that he proposed might be read before performances of the piece or used as material by singers in performance. We have chosen to integrate the entire poem into this performance.

Com' on now baby, stay on it.  
Change this thread on which we move  
from invisible to hardly tangible.

With you movin and groovin on it,  
making me feel fine as wine,  
I don't have to find the MEANING,  
because you will have filled in his most invisible and intangible Majesty's place;  
But only if you stay on it. You Dig  
Although his Majesty does stay with it,  
he can't stay on it. (Does that move you?)

Ties that move and break,  
disappear, and return again, are not ties that stay on it.  
They are sometimy bonds. These bonds cause  
screens like the Edge of Night, with  
Ivory snow liquid to appear.

This is why, baby cakes, I'm ringing you up  
in order to relay this song message  
so that you can get the feelin  
    O sweet boy  
Because without the movin and the groovin,  
the carin and the sharin,  
the reelin and the feelin,  
    I mean really.

## **Sounds Modern**

The most up-to-the-minute and least predictable concert music series in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, Sounds Modern has been exploring links between contemporary music and visual arts for over a decade. Conceived and directed by virtuoso flutist Elizabeth McNutt in collaboration with The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Sounds Modern adds a sonic dimension to the ideas represented in the galleries, and brings the artwork to life in the concert hall. McNutt also directs the Nova new music ensemble at the University of North Texas, where she teaches in the flute and composition areas. Sounds Modern assistant director Andrew May is on the UNT composition faculty.

## **Acknowledgments**

Thanks to Tina Gorski and John Nuckels for collaborating with us since 2007 to bring new sounds to the Modern. Congratulations especially to Tina on the occasion of her recent retirement! We've thoroughly enjoyed working with Tina all these years, and will miss her profoundly. Thanks also to our anonymous donor for contributing to making today's event possible.

Keep up with the latest Sounds Modern news at [www.soundsmodern.org](http://www.soundsmodern.org), [www.facebook.com/SoundsModern](https://www.facebook.com/SoundsModern), and on Instagram @soundsmodern. To make a tax-deductible donation to Sounds Modern, go to Elizabeth McNutt's page, and put Sounds Modern in the message: <https://app.thefield.org/home/donation/general/645569/0>