

August 11, 2010  
For Immediate Release

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# The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Music for People & Thingamajigs Festival featured on Rachel Maddow Show

**August 1, Oakland.** Artists from this year's Music for People & Thingamajigs Festival were interviewed and performed on the Rachel Maddow Show on MSNBC on Friday, September 24th, 2010. In this segment correspondent Kent Jones talked with artists and instrument builders Matthew Montfort, Gretchen Jude, Terry Berlier and Tom Nunn.

A link to the actual video footage can be found here:

Kent Jones rocks out on thingamajigs

Kent Jones reports on the strange instruments played at the Music for People and Thingamajigs Festival in San Francisco.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26315908/vp/39352511#39352511>

Kent Jones, the Rachel Maddow Show's pop-culturist, was in San Francisco September 23rd and 24th to cover the opening of the [Music for People and Thingamajigs Festival](#). Matthew Montfort kicked off the festival by showcasing his unusual guitars: the Godin Glissentar, an 11 string fretless guitar, and the scalloped fretboard guitar, a special modified instrument able to produce ornaments characteristic of the sitar. Getchen Jude demonstrated her light-sensored instrument called the Photo-Koto, which is a traditional Japanese koto mixed with homemade electronic gadgets. Stanford University faculty Terry Berlier showed off her 'percussion ball', which is an octagonal shape with tubes that acts as a resonator and determines the pitch or the note that is hit. Tom Nunn and David Michalak demonstrated their Scatchbox instruments made out of found objects stuck to cardboard boxes.

The "Just Enough" with Kent Jones segment airs during the last few minutes of the Rachel Maddow Show and aims to provide viewers with just enough pop culture news. During the sound check for the festival, Kent Jones interviewed the musicians from the

festival and played many of the instruments himself. After sound check, Kent Jones and his cameraman videotaped the entire opening night of the festival.

### **About the Festival:**

The Music For People & Thingamajigs Festival is an annual event dedicated to promoting experimental music that incorporates made/found instruments and alternate tuning systems. Each year, MFP&T invites artists who design their own musical instruments to join in a festival of workshops, music making, and performances with the goal of reaching a large, diverse audience of all ages. It is also a festival where the public can participate in instrument building and tuning educational workshops, as well as hear unique sounds and compositions from up and coming artists. Now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year, Thingamajigs' genre-crossing MFP&T Festival is the only annual event completely dedicated to music created with made/found materials and alternate tuning systems. Past participants include Carla Kihlstedt, Walter Kitundu, Pauline Oliveros, Brenda Hutchinson, William Winant, and Laetitia Sonami.

This year's festival featured music and world premiere performances from over 15 exciting artists and groups from the Bay Area and beyond. Noted works included a piece for multiple performers and two parrots by Mills College faculty Wendy Reid; "Music for Breathers" -a musical instrument that analyzes participants' breath patterns designed by Conner Lacy; a hybrid guitar called "The Global Guitar" that can play Traditional Indian tunings by Matthew Montfort; and a modified instrument called "Photo Koto" created and performed by Gretchen Jude. Many of these artists performed in the evening concerts as well as demonstrated their instruments at the family event at The Museum of Children's Art (MOCHA). The family welcomed some of Bay Area's most interesting new music groups and artists for an exhibition of musical installations, performances, and instrument building workshops for kids. This event took place outside in MOCHA's beautiful courtyard as well as in their classrooms inside the museum.

With concerts, artist talks/demonstrations, a free community outing and of course national exposure from MSNBC's Rachel Maddow Show, the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Music For People & Thingamajigs Festival proved to be our most far reaching and successful event to date.

**Thursday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> 8pm:** NOHspace, 2840 Mariposa Street, San Francisco, CA 94110 (\$10-\$15 sliding scale).

**Friday, September 24<sup>th</sup> 8pm:** Uptown Body & Fender, 401 26<sup>th</sup> Street, Oakland, CA (\$10-\$15 sliding scale).

**Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup> 8pm:** Vessel Gallery, 471 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Oakland, CA (\$10-\$15 sliding scale).

**Sunday, September 26<sup>th</sup> 1-4pm:** MOCHA, 538 Ninth Street, Suite 210, Oakland, CA 94607 (free with museum admission)

This year's festival is supported in part by:

Zellerbach Family Foundation  
Clorox Company Foundation  
Swiss National Cultural Foundation: PRO HELVETIA

### **History and Mission Statement:**

Thingamajigs is a genre-crossing arts organization that promotes, presents and performs music and other art forms created with made and found materials or alternate tuning systems.

Our mission is to develop and nurture the exploration of alternate materials and methods of creating sound, as well as promote collaborative efforts within other artistic disciplines. With open workshops, performances, artists exchanges and an educational program, we welcome audiences/participants of all ages and backgrounds to join in a wonderful tradition started in the Bay Area by such composers as Harry Partch, Lou Harrison, and John Cage.

Thingamajigs was founded as an art project in 1997 at Mills College, Oakland California. Created by Edward Schocker and Dylan Bolles, the project was originally conceived as a forum for composers/performers who develop new and unique ways of producing sound. The project soon broke out of the college environment and into an annual music festival called Music for People & Thingamajigs (now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year). In 2004 a permanent group of unpaid volunteer organizers and advisors was created. Together they expanded the yearly festival as well as created a season of international artist exchange programs (The Pacific Exchange) and an education program (Thingamakids!).

### **Artists involved:**

**Matthew Montfort** is the principal composer for and leader of the pioneering world music ensemble Ancient Future. Featured in the December 2009 commemorative Les Paul issue of Guitar Player Magazine, Montfort is a pioneer among guitarists who have had their fretboards scalloped in order to play various forms of world music that require intricate note-bending ornaments while still being able to play chords. Montfort immersed himself in an intensive study with vina master K.S. Subramanian in order to fully apply the South Indian gamaka (note-bending) techniques to the guitar. He is also known for his work on Glissentar, an 11 string fretless guitar that is able to render music in any tuning system. He has performed concerts worldwide, from the Festival Internacional de la Guitarra on the golden coast of Spain to the Festival of India in Mumbai. He has worked with many world music legends, including tabla phenomenon Zakir Hussain and Chinese zither master Zhao Hui. Montfort wrote the book Ancient Traditions - Future Possibilities: Rhythmic Training Through the Traditions of Africa, Bali, and India, which has been used by many musicians to improve their rhythm skills.

**Wendy Reid** received degrees from Mills College (M.A.), the University of Southern California, School of Performing Arts (B.M.), and attended Stanford University, Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics. Between 1975-77, she was a private pupil of Nadia Boulanger in Paris and Les Écoles D'Art Americaines at Fontainebleau. Composers she has studied under include Terry Riley, Robert Ashley, Halsey Stevens, James Hopkins and film composer David Raksin. She is the recipient of numerous awards and grants including Meet the Composer/California, Meet the Composer/New York, an ASMC grant, Subito grants and the Paul Merrit Henry Prize. Her works have been performed and broadcast throughout the United States, Europe and Asia by the Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the Kronos Quartet, the New Music Works Ensemble, the San Francisco String Quartet, the Tree Ensemble, Ruffled Feathers Tree-o. and others. Reid is producer of the new music series NEW MUSIC WITH BIRDS, FROGS AND OTHER CREATURES sponsored by the Natural Sciences Department of the Oakland Museum and the San Francisco Art Institute, and currently teaches music composition at Mills College and violin/ensemble/composition at Holy Names University PMD.

**Gretchen Jude** is a performer, composer, writer and artist from Boise, Idaho. Acoustic and electronic sound are juxtaposed in her work, which explores the borders between human and machine, analog and digital, East and West. In addition to her studies in vocal technique, music theory and electronic/computer music, Gretchen has studied koto, shamisen and tea ceremony in Japan, where she lived from 1997 to 2005.

**Terry Berlier** is an interdisciplinary artist who works primarily with sculpture, installation, and video. Her work is often kinetic, interactive and/or sound based and often focuses around everyday objects, the environment, ideas of nonplace/place and queer practice.

Her work has been exhibited in solo and group shows both nationally and internationally (Europe, Australia, Middle East) including Barcelona, Venice, Girona, Mainz, Tel Aviv, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Sacramento. She recently received the Kala Art Institute fellowship and residency for 2009-10 in Berkeley, CA and a residency in Budapest at the Hungarian Multicultural Center for July 2010. In 2008-9 she received the Visions from the New California Residency at the Exploratorium: Museum of Science, Art and Human Perception in San Francisco through the Alliance of Artists Communities. She has received grants from California Council for Humanities California Stories Fund, City of Cincinnati Individual Artist Grant, and the City of Davis Art Contract. She was a fellowship recipient for a residency at the Millay Colony for Artists in New York in 2004.

**Ben Taylor** is a composer whose work centers around internet art and instrument building. His web installations have been seen in the US and Germany, and his sample-based web collages have been performed at Mills College, UC Davis, and Cal Arts. While at Mills College, he recently developed a system for rapidly updating content to websites, allowing him to interact with his websites kinesthetically. In addition, Ben is a piano tuner and often incorporates complex tuning systems into his works. Ben was born

in Charlottesville, VA. He graduated from Kenyon College with a B.A. in Music studying under Brian Harnetty and received his M.F.A. at Mills College studying with Chris Brown, John Bischoff, and James Fei.

**Bart Hopkin** is maker of acoustic musical instruments and a student of musical instruments worldwide. He received a B.A. *magna cum laude* from Harvard University in folklore and mythology specializing in ethnomusicology in 1974, and later picked up a B.A. in music education and a teaching credential at San Francisco State University. From 1985 to 1999 he edited the quarterly journal *Experimental Musical Instruments* ([www.windworld.com](http://www.windworld.com)). The journal served as an essential resource and clearing house in an otherwise scattered, but lively and growing field. Since 1994, Bart has written several books on instruments and their construction, and produced several CDs featuring the work of innovative instrument makers worldwide. He has taught musical instrument construction at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, presented talks at the Acoustical Society of America, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics at Stanford University and MIT's Media Lab, and he has consulted and presented workshops for the Exploratorium in San Francisco.

**Adam Fong** is a composer, performer, and producer of new music. A San Francisco Bay Area native, he holds master's degrees from both Stanford University (English) and California Institute of the Arts (Music Composition), where he studied with James Tenney. He has also studied composition with Christian Wolff and Wadada Leo Smith. He performs regularly in new music concerts and festivals. His own works have been performed internationally in Auckland, London, Berlin, Tübingen and Darmstadt, at many US universities, and throughout California, by performers including the two-piano team Dennis Russell Davies and Maki Namekawa. As Associate Director of Other Minds, Fong has since 2006 produced the annual Other Minds Festival, dubbed the "premier new music festival on the West Coast" (Los Angeles Times), and many special projects including the CD reissue of Conlon Nancarrow's *Studies for Player Piano*, tribute concerts to Ruth Crawford Seeger and Henry Cowell, and the American Premiere of *18 Microtonal Ragas* based on "Solo for Voice 58" by John Cage.

**Michael Carreira** spent most of his time over the past several years as a drummer touring and/or recording with bands including Cryptacize (Asthmatic Kitty), Odawas (Jagjaguwar), Donovan Quinn (Soft Abuse), and Danielson (Secretly Canadian). Over the years he has worked with local musicians including Eric Glick Rieman, Jorge Boehringer, Jacob Zimmerman, and Cenk Ergun. Michael studied drums with Tim Genis (Boston Symphony), Willie Winant, and Scott Kettner (Maracatu NY) and hold degrees in composition from Boston University and Mills College.

**Conner Lacy** graduated from the University of Virginia in 2008 where he studied music and digital art. He is currently pursuing an MFA in Electronic Music and Recording Media at Mills College. His work includes sound-based performance art, building multimedia instruments, interactive installations, and composing acoustic and electronic music. His interests include: changing religion frequently, mathematical/data-based

aesthetics, ecological power, shamanism, sophisticated systems, the ancient, and the ineffable.

**Doug Carroll** explores the world of sound as a recordist, composer and cellist. He has studied composition at the Royal Conservatory in Den Hague with Karlheinz Stockhausen and at the Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music. At Mills College, Carroll studied composition with Lou Harrison and Anthony Braxton and received an MFA in Electronic Music and Recording Media. In radio, Carroll produced "Highlights of the Irving M. Klein International String Competition," distributed nationally on the NPR network and worked as engineer for "Sports Byline, USA," a nationally syndicated radio sports talk show. As a cellist, Carroll has performed in Europe and the US and with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in the world premiere of "Ocean."

Doug Carroll explores new sonic domains with "Animal Sounds" for cello and recorded sound. In this piece, Carroll uses extended techniques and electronic processing in improvisations for cello. The recorded portion includes animal sounds produced by over twenty species that were recorded in the wild and in zoos.

**Luis Brennan** is recent graduate of the University of Chicago with physics major and philosophy minor. His interest in the arts goes back to the miles of museums his parents dragged him through as a child, for which he is infinitely grateful (no matter how tired he was of seeing cherubs). In high school this visual memory became a lot of paintings with the help of the unparalleled Ms. Constance Wolf. He has also been engaged with numerous progressive political causes on this campus. He plans on continuing this political commitment next year through various avenues in Chicago.

**Tom Nunn** has designed, built and performed with original musical instruments since 1975, having received a B.Mus. and M.A. in music composition from the University of Texas at Austin and S.U.N.Y. Stony Brook. His instruments typically utilize commonly available materials, are sculptural in appearance, utilize contact microphones for amplification, and are designed specifically for improvisation with elements of ambiguity, unpredictability and nonlinearity. In addition to the more than 50 instruments he has made, Tom has performed extensively throughout the San Francisco Bay Area over the last 20 years, and in Canada and Europe, both as soloist and with other musicians, including the groups ROTODOTI and OFF RAMP, and has appeared on a number of recordings (see DISCOGRAPHY). In 1998, Tom completed writing and self-published WISDOM OF THE IMPULSE: ON THE NATURE OF FREE IMPROVISATION, a book that examines various aspects of this illusive art and presents a theoretical foundation for creative listening, analysis and discussion. Tom has also written a number of articles about the use of experimental instruments and improvisation in publications such as EXPERIMENTAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, MUSICWORKS and LEONARDO. Open Graves

**Alex Potts** is an installation artist, sound designer, and filmmaker. His work involves unique sound sculptures that are made from the fusion of ancient, organic forms and

technology: gourds, speakers and interactive software instruments.

**Open Graves** is a duo consisting of bay area musician Jesse Olsen and Seattle percussionist/instrument builder Paul Kikuchi. The duo utilizes a wide range of traditional and invented instruments, found objects, and unusual acoustic environments to create highly original, evocative compositions and improvisations.

Open Graves is often joined by guest musicians such as renowned trombonist Stuart Dempster and percussionist/electronic musician Alex Vittum.

**Pauchi Sasaki**, Peruvian violinist and composer, started her studies in classical music at age of 5, she has experimented with different styles of fiddle; from the Andes of Peru, Jewish klezmer violin (NY), Hindu music (SF) and the Chinese erhu. She has become most known for her site-specific performances and original electro-acoustic creations. Her compositions have been heard in short films, plays and dance choreographs in Spain, Japan, Peru, NY and San Francisco.

**Tom Kaufmann** is a musician, wire sculptor, edutainer, instrument builder and furniture maker. In addition to a busy performance schedule as a pianist and singer, he is the owner of Tinkertunes Music Studios in Traverse City, Michigan, and for the past 15 years has delighted children of all ages with his Traveling Musical Instrument Petting Zoo. He was a featured presenter and performer at last year's "Imagine Arts Festival" in Waterford, Ireland.

Tom also designs and builds hands-on musical sculptures for museums, schools and libraries, that demonstrate the scientific principals of sound and vibration. Using salvaged granite countertop, drainage pipe and oxygen tanks, he creates lithophones, slaptubes, and bells that are tuned and playable instruments. His "Upright Furniture Company" recycles old unwanted upright pianos, and converts them into distinctive desks, cabinets and music workstations.