

The Mills College at Northeastern University Music Department,  
Center for Contemporary Music, and Performing Arts Center present

**Mills Music Now 2022-2023**

**Myra Melford, Zeena Parkins, William Winant**  
**IMPROVISATION**

**Jeannik Méquet Littlefield Concert Hall**  
**October 29, 2022 8:00 pm**

**Improvisation**  
**Myra Melford, piano**  
**Zeena Parkins, harp**  
**William Winant, percussion**

Tonight's performance will be without intermission.

Please turn off cell phones, electronic pagers, and alarm watches. No unauthorized recording or photography. Seating only during breaks in the performance. Please take a moment to look around for the nearest available emergency exit.

## **Myra Melford**

The pianist, composer, bandleader and educator Myra Melford—whom the *New Yorker* called “a stalwart of the new-jazz movement”—has spent the last three decades making brilliant original music that is equally challenging and engaging. Culling inspiration from a wide range of sources including Cecil Taylor, the blues and boogie-woogie of her native Chicago, the poetry of Rumi, the AACM and yoga, she’s explored an array of formats, among them ruminative solo-piano recitals, deeply interactive combos and ambitious multidisciplinary programs. Melford’s most recent release, *The Other Side of Air* (Firehouse 12), by her quintet Snowy Egret, is an extraordinary document of her unique creative language—a seamless, shifting blend of composition and improvisation, and a probing of the space shared between dynamic small-group jazz and contemporary chamber music. Since debuting on record as a bandleader in 1990, she’s built a discography of more than 20 albums as a leader or co-leader, and has collaborated with such luminaries as Dave Douglas, Marty Ehrlich, Liberty Ellman, Erik Friedlander, Ben Goldberg, Joseph Jarman, Leroy Jenkins, Ron Miles, Nicole Mitchell, Tyshawn Sorey, Chris Speed, Stomu Takeishi, Cuong Vu and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

Melford’s teachers and mentors include Butch Morris, Henry Threadgill, Jaki Byard, Don Pullen and other icons of jazz postmodernism, and she has received some of the most prestigious honors available to an improvising musician: numerous DownBeat poll placings, a 2000 Fulbright scholarship, a 2012 Alpert Award in the Arts for Music and, in 2013, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award and the Doris Duke Residency to Build Demand for the Arts.

After having been an influential presence in New York since the mid-’80s, Melford relocated to the Bay Area in 2004, to join the music department at the University of California, Berkeley, as a Professor of Composition and Improvisational Practices. She continues to bring cutting-edge jazz and new music to the campus community via her teaching and as a guest curator for the Cal Performances organization.

## **Zeena Parkins**

New York based electro-acoustic composer / improviser Zeena Parkins is a pioneer of contemporary harp practices. Using expanded techniques, object preparations, and electronic processing she has re-defined the instrument’s capacities. Concurrently, Parkins self-designed a series of one-of-a kind electric instruments. She leans into the harp’s physical limitations pushing its boundaries and impossibilities. In her compositions, Parkins utilizes collections, recombination, historic proximities, geography, tactility, spatial configurations and movement. Sonic presence and personality is revealed in explorations of subtle frequency shifts, feedback, over and under tones, melodic fragments, timbral and gestural intervals, perception, and residues.

Over a 30-year career Parkins has worked with an unlikely range of collaborators. She has recorded and toured with Björk. A series of concerts with Yoko Ono led to the live album *Blueprint for a Sunrise*. Early collaborations with John Zorn include performances of his game piece *Darts* at the MOMA Sculpture Garden and touring the groundbreaking work *Cobra* as well as performing in its first studio recording for Swiss label, Hat Art. Parkins was selected by Pauline Oliveros to play bass accordion for a performance of the composer’s concerto for multiple accordions with the Brooklyn Philharmonic and premiered a piece written for her by Yasunao Tone, *The Origin of Geometry: an Introduction*, at Phil Niblock’s loft Experimental Intermedia. In the 2010 Whitney Museum exhibition, *Christian Marclay: Festival*,

Parkins directed and performed a week-long program of concerts that activated his graphic scores. For over ten years Parkins toured and recorded with composer/conductor/composer, Butch Morris in his seminal conductions. Long-time collaborator, Fred Frith, invited her into Skeleton Crew when the band expanded from a duo with Tom Cora into a trio. She performed in many of Frith's projects and they frequently shared the stage as improvisers. Important relationships also include Phantom Orchard with Ikue Mori, and projects with Nels Cline, William Winant and Elliott Sharp.

### **William Winant**

In 2016, Winant was awarded a large unrestricted grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts in recognition for his groundbreaking work as a contemporary percussionist. In 2014 he received a Grammy nomination for his recording of John Cage's historic solo work, 27' 10.554" for a percussionist, on Micro Fest Records.

He has collaborated with some of the most innovative and creative musicians of our time, including John Cage, Iannis Xenakis, Pierre Boulez, Frank Zappa, Keith Jarrett, Roscoe Mitchell, Anthony Braxton, Fred Frith, James Tenney, Terry Riley, Cecil Taylor, Gerry Hemingway, Mark Dresser, Barry Guy, Marilyn Crispell, George Lewis, Steve Reich and Musicians, Nexus, Charles Wuorinen, Jean-Philippe Collard, Frederic Rzewski, Ursula Oppens, Joan LaBarbara, Annea Lockwood, Danny Elfman/Oingo Boingo, Ashley Fure, Sonic Youth, Marc Ribot, Keith Rowe, Ikue Mori, Joey Barron, Lin Culbertson, Bill Frisell, Yo-Yo Ma, Rova Saxophone Quartet, Lawrence "Butch" Morris, and the Kronos String Quartet.

He has recorded and toured worldwide with his own groups including ROOM, w/Chris Brown and Larry Ochs, CHALLENGE, with Anthony Braxton and David Rosenboom, WAKE, with Frank Gratkowski and Chris Brown, the ABEL/ STEINBERG/WINANT TRIO, and the WILLIAM WINANT PERCUSSION GROUP.

He is principal percussionist with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, has been closely associated with NYC composer John Zorn, and has made numerous recordings, and performed in many projects throughout the world with the composer. Starting in 1995 he has been the percussionist with the avant-rock band Mr. Bungle, has made two recordings ("Disco Volante" and "California" on Warner Brothers), and has toured throughout the world with this group. For many years he had worked with composer Lou Harrison, recording and premiering many of his works, and in March of 1997 he participated in the world premiere of Lou Harrison's quintet Rhymes with Silver featuring cellist Yo-Yo Ma and the Mark Morris Dance Group, and has toured the piece throughout the United States and Great Britain.

In the fall of 2011, he joined Mike Patton's Italian pop music project "Mondo Cane" which features a 12 piece band + string orchestra, and have recently completed tours of South America and Australia.

In the fall of 2003, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Mr. Winant, along with composers Takehisa Kosugi and Christian Wolff, created music for a series of eight special "Events" staged by Merce Cunningham and Dancers at London's Turbine Hall at the Tate Modern. Winant continued to tour throughout Europe and the United States with the dance company until 2009.

He has made over 200 recordings, covering a wide variety of genres, including music by Earle Brown, John Cage, Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff, John Zorn, Butch Morris, James Newton, Frank Gratkowski, Pauline Oliveros, Joan Jeanrenaud, Luc Ferrari, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Danny Elfman ("Batman Returns"), Siouxsie and the Banshees, Secret Chiefs 3,

ICP, Han Bennik, The Ex, White Out with Jim O'Rourke, Lou Reed, Thurston Moore, and Mike Patton.

His recording of Lou Harrison's *La Koro Sutro* (which he produced for New Albion Records) was the New York Times Critic's Choice for best contemporary recording of 1988. In 1999 he produced a recording of music by 20th-century avant-garde composers with the influential rock band Sonic Youth; *Goodbye 20th-Century* (SYR4), was hailed by both The Los Angeles Times and New York's Village Voice as one of the best compendiums of this type of music ever recorded. His recording with cellist Joan Jeanrenaud of her CD *Strange Toys* was nominated for a Grammy in 2009. Also, he along with guitarists Henry Kaiser and David Lindley, created special music for Werner Herzog's 2009 Oscar nominated documentary *Encounters at the End of the World*.

Mr. Winant has premiered many new works written specifically for him, by such noted composers as John Cage, Christian Wolff, Lou Harrison, John Zorn, Zeena Parkins, Bun-Ching Lam, Barbara Monk Feldman, Hi-Kyung Kim, Roscoe Mitchell, Wendy Reid, Ralph Shapey, Peter Garland, Michael Byron, Paul Dresner, Alvin Curran, Frederic Rzewski, Chris Brown, David Rosenboom, Larry Polansky, Gordon Mumma, Alvin Lucier, Terry Riley, Fred Frith, Somei Satoh, and Wadada Leo Smith.

Mr. Winant has been featured as a guest artist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (under the direction of Pierre Boulez), the San Francisco Symphony, and the Berkeley Symphony (Kent Nagano, director), as well as at Cabrillo Festival, Monterey Jazz Festival, SF Jazz Festival, Central Park Summerstage, Ravinia Festival, Salzburg Festival, Donaueschingen Festival, Victoriaville, Holland Festival, Edinburgh Festival, Ojai Festival, Sonar Festival, All Tomorrow's Parties, Taklos, Other Minds Festival, Lincoln Center, Melt Down Festival, Royal Festival Hall, Library of Congress, The Barbican, The Kennedy Center, Paris Opera, Disney Hall, Miller Theater Composer Portraits Series, Merkin Hall, Guggenheim Museum, and Brooklyn Academy of Music.

For ten years he was principal percussionist with the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra (Dennis Russell Davies, director), and timpanist with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra 1985–1988 (Nicholas McGegan, director).

He is a Visiting Lecturer at the University of California at Santa Cruz, and teaches at Mills College and the University of California at Berkeley. For eight years Mr. Winant was Artist-in-Residence at Mills College with the critically acclaimed Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio. Formed in 1984, the ASW Trio has premiered over 25 new works for violin, piano, and percussion at major festivals and recitals throughout the world. Their recordings can be heard on the New Albion, Tzadik, and CRI/New World labels.

### **Mills Music Now 2022-2023**

Dewing Piano Recital  
Tellef Johnson  
Sunday, November 6, 2022 - 3:00pm

Tudor Composer in Residence  
Ellen Fullman  
November, 19, 2022 - 8:00pm

Laetitia Sonami Concert  
Saturday, February 4, 2023 - 8:00pm

Barbara Strozzi, Venetian Virtuosa  
Schola Cantorum San Francisco – Paul Flight, director  
Sunday, April 16, 2023 - 3:00pm

Raven Chacon  
Vaux Composer in Residence  
Saturday, March 18, 2023 - 8:00pm

Signal Flow  
Friday, March 31–Saturday, April 1, 2023 - 8:00pm