

Artist Bios

DAVID FIRST has always been fascinated by opposites and extremes. At 20 he played guitar with renowned avant-jazz pianist Cecil Taylor in a legendary Carnegie Hall concert. Two years later he was creating electronic music as an artist-in-residence at Princeton (released in 2013 on Dais records) and leading a Mummer's String Band in Philadelphia parades. He has played in raucous drunken bar bands, semi-legal DIY basements and in pin-drop quiet concert halls with classical ensembles. As a composer First has created everything from finely crafted pop songs to long, severely minimalist microtonal droneworks. His AIDS crisis opera, *The Manhattan Book of the Dead*, was staged at LaMama's Annex Theater (NYC) in 1995 and in Potsdam, Germany in 1996. His 2011 song, *We Are* (featuring TV on the Radio's Kyp Malone), was released to much acclaim in the Occupy Movement and was officially released on the compilation *Occupy This Album* which also featured tracks by Patti Smith, Willie Nelson, Yoko Ono a.o. First's performances often find him sitting trance-like without seeming to move a muscle, unless he is playing with his psychedelic punk band, *Notekillers*, at which time he is a whirling blur of hyperactive energy. He has been called "a fascinating artist with a singular technique." in the *New York Times*, and "a bizarre cross between Hendrix and La Monte Young." in the *Village Voice*. First's most recent project, *Same Animal, Different Cages* (Fabrica records), is a series of solo LPs on a variety of instruments, including acoustic guitar, analog synth, the most recent, *Civil War Songs* for solo harmonica, and sitar (TBR winter 2018). His sound installations have been exhibited at Studio 5 Beekman, Diapason, Exit Art and Harvestworks in NYC as well as the Kunstforeningen (Copenhagen) and Konstmuseum (Uppsala). Previous versions of *Dave's Waves Sonic Restaurant* audio/video installation have been exhibited in Lier, Belgium (2002), Berlin (as part of *Sonambiente* in 2006), Leeuwarden, the Netherlands (2013), and Moscow (2018).

Hard to pin down, harder to hold onto. Bent circuit board snake charmers unfurl across hexagonal grids. A seemingly familiar sound but then you realize you have your ear pressed against a reflection. **SUNWATCHERS** are a distorted prism to so many past greats. Reminiscent of Ethiopiques, John Handy Band, Terry Riley, Art Ensemble meets Laddio Bolocko...Forever swirling saxophone blended belly to belly with elastic guitar and tin foil thin phin (a thai instrument not unlike an electrified tenor guitar or sitar). A whirlpool of repetitious interpretations. Militaristic marches ascend into meditations. These songs map out great pyramids and deep buried labyrinths. They are massive. They are leviathans.

KATE MOHANTY is an avant-garde saxophonist based in Brooklyn. Mohanty has released two solo albums, most recently *Disappear Here* (friendship tapes) in October 2019. Kate's debut solo EP, *The Double Image*, was named to *Avant Music News Best of 2017*. www.katemohanty.com

Originally hailing from Richmond, Virginia, **CRAIG SCHENKER** is a saxophonist/improviser/composer based in Brooklyn, New York. After many years playing in the underground experimental music scene in Nashville, TN he relocated to New York in 2013. His current projects include *a&h*, a solo performance practice exploring ambient sonic territory through an entry point of European and American folk traditions, and *M/S\T*, a trio of sax and double drums that specializes in spiritual skronk.

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Based in New York City, **ERIN ROGERS** is a Canadian-American composer, saxophonist, and performance artist dedicated to new and experimental music. Named a “rising star” (Broadway World), her music has been described as “whimsical, theatrical” (Brooklyn Vegan), “a wild ride” (An Earful), and “so complex, it’s primitive.” (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette). Her work explores the intersection of chamber music, sound alchemy, and theatre, moving freely between acoustic and electronic worlds, with performances at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Roulette, The Knockdown Center, MATA Festival, Ecstatic Festival, Prototype Festival, Nief-Norf Summer Festival, wasteLAnd, and internationally, at the Centro Nacional de las Artes (Mexico City), Resonanzraum (Hamburg), Círculo de Bellas Artes (Madrid); NyMusikk Bergen (Norway), Edmonton Fringe Festival (Canada), Splendor (Amsterdam), and the World Saxophone Congress in St. Andrews, Scotland. Crossing genres, from theatre-to-installation-to-silence, through collaborations with Orange Theatre, Panoply Performance Laboratory, Harvestworks, Experiments in Opera, Decoder, and Music for Contemplation, Rogers’ music has been featured on the French Quarter Festival (New Orleans), Continuum Music Festival (Memphis), Charlotte New Music Festival, SPLICE Festival (Kalamazoo), Bowling Green New Music Festival, Foro Internacional de Musica Nueva Manuel Enriquez (Mexico City) and the mise-en Festival (NYC). She has performed with the International Contemporary Ensemble, Talea, Copland House, and wildUp, and is co-artistic director of the experimental performance ensembles: thingNY, New Thread Saxophone Quartet, Hypercube, and Popebama. www.erinmrogers.com

ELLIOTT LEVIN grew up in Philly, but studied music and creative writing on the west coast at the University of Oregon. He took private lessons with a former Philadelphia Orchestra saxophonist, Michael Guera, and embarked on further research with the great jazz pianist, Cecil Taylor, in whose groups Levin has also performed. Claire Polin is Levin's primary instructor on flute. The weekend grocery list of Levin credits includes playing with Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes for a decade as the saxophonist in the Sound of Philadelphia band, as well as with Odean Popes' Saxophone Choir, Tyrone Hill, Don Preston, Scram!, New Ghost, Atzilut (Fourth World), Talking Free Bebop, and various collaborations with bassist Jamaladeen Tacuma. Levin's gigs with Taylor included the groups Phthongas and Unit Core Ensemble, and he can be heard on the Taylor FMP album Live in Berlin. On the poetry scene he has performed with Miguel Algarin, Gloria Tropp, Mbali Umoja, Marty Watt, and Frank Messina. Levin has published several books of his verse, which also appears in publications such as L.A. Weekly, Blue Beat Jacket, The Painted Word, Po' Fly, Vital Pulse, and Poets and Prophets. He has received awards from New American Radio in New York, The City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts, and the California Endowment for the Humanities.

JEREMY DANNEMAN has performed internationally in Tokyo, Berlin, Rwanda, Zanzibar, Cambodia, Vietnam, and the Dominican Republic, and has contributed to recordings with bands including the Mysterium Electric Soundpainting Septet, the New York Soundpainting Orchestra, El Pueblo, and Ulysses. Other notable musical collaborators include William Parker, Tim Keiper, Anders Nilsson, Sophie Nzayisenga, and Arn Chorn-Pond. Danneman has also performed and composed music for multiple films, including Rwanda 15 directed by Kivu Ruhorahoza, which documents Danneman’s street performances in Rwanda in 2009 and has screened on three continents, including its world premier at the 2010 Zanzibar International Film Festival and the 2011 Vision Festival in New York City. As an educator, Danneman has given guest lectures for the Ramaz High School (Manhattan,) The Royal University of Fine Arts (Cambodia,) the faculty of Baltimore County Community College, and more. He is currently a teaching artist for Midori and Friends. Danneman holds a BA in British and American Literature from New York University.