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**April 2013**

## about this thing

The Transbay Creative Music Calendar is a volunteer-produced free monthly journal for non-commercial creative new music in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to our comprehensive listing of upcoming events, we publish articles and reviews about local music and the people who create it. We talk about a wide range of modern music, including: experimental, improvised, noise, electronic, free-jazz, outrock, 21st century compositions, and sonic art. Each month, 1,000 copies of the Transbay are mailed to individuals and hand-delivered to over 45 performance venues and public locations throughout the Bay Area. Contact us for a free subscription.

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the **transbay**  
Creative Music Calendar



CD REVIEW BY DOUG CARROLL

## Integrating Dualities: A Review of Plastic Critters, Nunn, Crossman, McGee

Plastic Critters is a new CD that features compositions by Allan Crossman and Mike McGee that highlight original instruments created by Tom Nunn. A healthy dose of improvisations round out this 2013 Edgetone Records release. Plastic Critters does a masterful job of integrating dualities—modern and traditional instruments, solo and orchestral scoring, as well as compositions and improvisations. However, this unique approach does not rely on uniqueness alone as a distinct musicality is maintained throughout the album. Tantalizing timbres, exceptional performances, and inspired compositions are all combined in generating this landmark recording.

Plasticity, composed by Allan Crossman (2009), is a concerto movement for the Sonoglyph, an instrument designed and built by Tom Nunn in 1992, who also performs on this piece. The Sonoglyph defies a single traditional categorization which includes: ideophone—a resonant solid material vibrating to produce sound; chordophone—a vibrating string produces sound; and electrophone—utilizing electronic generation or amplification. Comprised of metal rods, nails, stretched strings, a plastic comb, and other sound surfaces mounted on an amplified wooden base, the Sonoglyph constitutes a type of polyphone, with its multiple sound production design. Other instruments created by Nunn on this album include the T-Rodimba, tuned metal rods mounted on an amplified wooden base; the Skatchbox, a small amplified cardboard box with plastic combs and other sound generators attached; and the Crustacean, an amplified metal plate with attached metal rods. These unique instruments are but a few of those built by Nunn, who has been making original instruments since 1976. All of his instruments offer never-heard-before timbres and are designed for expressive performance technique.

This recording of Plasticity includes an outstanding performance by the San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Mark Alburger. Members of the orchestra are Bruce Salvisberg, flute/piccolo; Phil Freihofner, oboe; Rachel Condry, clarinet; Michael Cooke, bassoon; David Sprung, horn; Eduard Prosek, trumpet; Anne Szabla, percussion; Monica Gruber and Hande Erdem, violins; Charith Premawardhana, viola; Ariella Hyman, cello; and John Beeman, bass. The interpretation rendered by these performers and conductor

captures the zeitgeist of the piece with accuracy and expression.

In general, plasticity refers to a capability to form or shape and that is exactly what Crossman has accomplished in this composition. The richness of the concerto movement is shaped by its multi-tonal character, seamlessly weaving non-pitched sounds of the Sonoglyph and the traditional instruments. A dreamlike introduction created by the Sonoglyph is punctuated by tonal sections of the orchestra which vault the listener into a previously undiscovered musical world. The orchestration seems to always strike the right balance of winds, strings and percussion. Sonoglyph cadenzas spotlight the multi-timbral capabilities of the instrument and Nunn's performance is splendid. In Plasticity, Crossman demonstrates that contrasting dualities are not immiscible, but fully capable of being mixed. Modern and traditional instruments, solo and orchestral scoring, diatonic and non-pitched musical elements synergistically coexist and define or contextualize each other in a deconstructive manner. Pluralism does yield to monism in the final analysis.

Critter and Box on the Rocks is a three movement piece composed by Michael McGee (2010). This duet is scored for three Nunn polyphones, T-Rodimba, Skatchbox, and Crustacean (one instrument for each movement) and clarinet, performed by Blake McGee, son of the composer. In the first movement, sprightly rhythms on the T-Rodimba dance with compelling melodies on the clarinet, which occasionally uses electronic processing to provide echo and reverb effects. The score integrates standard notation for the clarinet and a timeline with parameters that define an improvisation for the percussion part.

The second movement features the Skatchbox and clarinet. This movement takes the listener on a delightful journey into a magical forest. Melodic material evokes memories of Debussy and the Skatchbox gives birth to tiny creatures that scramble around the forest floor. McGee scores the third movement for Crustacean and clarinet. The evocative introduction has rich, sustained tones that progress into an odd but beautiful marriage between the pitched and non-pitched.

Blake McGee's performances on clarinet throughout the CD are exceptional. Phrasing,

dynamics, and intonalization are flawless as all registers of the clarinet are thoroughly explored. Michael McGee's Critter and Box on the Rocks reflects that timeless quality of great compositions—always changing yet always staying the same.

Aside from the two compositions, Plastic Critters is rounded out with a series of improvisations. The first is a solo by Nunn playing the Skatchbox in a tour de force for the instrument. By playing the instrument with shaped plastic combs, Nunn generates an amazing variety of sounds that resemble analog synthesizers and crickets at times. What is most intriguing is the occasional vocal quality produced by the instrument.

The second is a duet for Skatchbox and clarinet that provides another one-of-a-kind musical landscape. More pointillistic than previous pieces, electronic processing on the clarinet enhances the other worldly character of the piece. A solo clarinet improvisation performed by Blake McGee follows. This piece is a tonal improvisation that reveals the full range of the clarinet. Electronic processing is tastefully done and augments the musicality of the piece. The last improvisation is a duet for clarinet and Crustacean. Haunting themes on the clarinet mingle with the glacier-like tones of the Crustacean.

Overall, Plastic Critters presents an impressive collection of musical pieces. The delicate and risky task of combining modern and traditional instruments, compositions and improvisations, soloists and orchestra, has been successfully accomplished by these performers and composers. For the composers' part, Crossman and McGee extend a type of West Coast sound that was pioneered by the likes of Lou Harrison and La Monte Young in which alternate tonalities are utilized as compositional tools. Whether this West Coast sound is autochthonous or not may well be hotly debated. However, it is difficult to deny the Minimalist strain and other postmodern developments, such as New Age, have some West Coast connections. East Coast irony yields to West Coast contentment in many musical compositions as well as visual arts as seen in the works of Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams, for example.●

# the transbay

## Creative Music Calendar

### Monday April 1

Luna's Cafe & Juice Bar • 8pm  
Luna's Cafe presents: The Use (theremin, Glitch style) <http://reverbnation.com/theusemusic>  
Jay Van Dyke

Make-Out Room • 8pm free  
The Monday Makeout:  
Wiener Kids (Shelton-Wright-Glenn)  
Jon Raskin's The Long Table (Greenlief-Seamans-Hasset-Shiurba-Raskin)  
Phillip Greenlief's Dirtier (Olquin-Hanes-Greenlief)

### Wednesday April 3

Berkeley Arts Festival • 8pm \$10-20  
8pm: Larry Ochs - saxophones; Donald Robinson - drums  
9pm: Zachary James Watkins - electronics; Marshall Trammell - drums; Sun Ra Homage: Dance of the Language Barrier

### Thursday April 4

First Thursdays at the Schoolhouse • 7:30pm \$5-\$20  
First Thursdays Presents - GHOST In The SCHOOLHOUSE  
GHOST IN THE HOUSE - Dana Jessen, Polly Moller, Karen Stackpole, Tom Nunn & David Michalak with Butoh dancer Kinji Hayashi. Dean Santomieri & Thea Farhadian will open the show.

Luggage Store New Music Series • 8pm \$6-10  
8pm: rawmean - guitar, live looping, Tupperware, hand drum  
9pm: Phog masheen

### Friday April 5

Berkeley Arts Festival • 6pm \$7  
Join sound artist and educator Loren Chasse and sound installation artist Jacob Kirkegaard in the Silence galleries for a singular listening experience. Combining ambient recordings of the gallery space, otoacoustic emission recordings, and real-time interactive performance, Chasse and Kirkegaard create a multilayered aural experience as they respond to the space and each other.

Turquoise Yantra Grotto • 8pm \$10-15 sliding scale  
Noisy with a chance of TEXT  
breaking the ultimate taboo in noise- meaning...  
Red Thread- CJ Borosque and Laurie Amat  
Pitta of the Mind- Amar Chaudary and Maw Shein Win

### Saturday April 6

Mills College Art Museum • 8pm free  
The graduating senior class of Mills College Studio Arts program invites you to their Senior Exhibition, Spontaneous Order. The exhibit is the culmination of four years of undergraduate work and presents the strongest pieces from artists at the beginning of their artistic careers. These seventeen inventive, creative, and dedicated studio artists working in sculpture, painting, photography, video and ceramics are hosting an opening reception and an art swap to bookend the three-week exhibition.

Bottom of the Hill • 8:30pm \$10 adv./\$12 door  
The Fuxedos return to smash up San Francisco! For the first time ever, we're co-headlining our new favorite SF spot to slay...with a scorching set that'll include such gems as the Bay Area debut of "Space Suite," our new sci-fi/space rock mini-musical. Plus Polkacide and Borts Minorts. <http://www.fuxedos.com>

### Sunday April 7

SIMM Series • 7:30pm \$10/\$8  
7:30pm: The Holly Martins  
Kasey Knudsen- alto sax; Eric Vogler- guitar; Lorin Benedict- voice  
8:30pm: Noertker's Moxie  
Annelise Zamula - tenor sax, flute; Amber Lamprecht - oboe, flute; John Vaughn - baritone sax, flute; Bill Noertker - contrabass; Dax Compise - drums

Berkeley Arts Festival • 8pm \$10-20  
Kattt Atchley - voice  
Ron Heglin - voice  
Kenneth Atchley - electronics  
The three Bay Area sound artists surf the limen of timbres, tunings, and harmonies in a concert-length evening performance of solos, duets and trios.

### Tuesday April 9

Uptown • 9pm donations  
Active Music Series presents Street Priest + Hare and Arrow + Nathan Clevenger Group  
Street Priest with Kristian Aspelin, guitar; Matt Chandler, bass; Jacob Felix Heule, drums. Noisy, loud, and energetic improvised music with the openness and freedom to explore more reflective, atmospheric, and quiet moments when appropriate.  
Hare and Arrow with Dave Dupuis, Nuns Horn 3 and upright bass; Crystal Pascucci, ozukuri and cello; Sung Kim, the fawn, the hare, and the Nuns Horn 4.  
Nathan Clevenger group with Kasey Knudsen, alto sax; Cory Wright - bass clarinet, tenor sax; Rebecca Kleinmann, flute, alto flute; Nathan Clevenger, guitar; Sam Bevan, bass; Jon Arkin, drums.

### Wednesday April 10

Meridian Gallery • 7:30pm \$10, \$8  
Meridian Music Composers in Performance Series presents new works by Laura Inserra.  
An evening of full immersion into unheard sounds and the Hang, an ineffable sound sculpture.  
To hear the sound of the Hang through recordings can never give you the real experience of its profoundness and uniqueness. Take this opportunity to immerse yourself and your senses in this infinite cosmos of sounds, rhythms and harmony. Allow yourself to connect with a deep listening... throughout the sound, to your senses, to your inner space. Inserra will present also a visual art installation called Laugrafia, a work done on slides treated with the scratch technique.

Berkeley Arts Festival • 8pm \$10-20  
Two sets, starting at 8 pm  
Alex Pinto Trio  
Alex Pinto - Guitar  
Doug Stuart - Bass  
Shaun Lowecki - Drums

### Thursday April 11

Luggage Store New Music Series • 8pm \$6-10  
8pm: Aram Shelton - saxophone & processing  
9pm: Lutra Lutra (Voices) Lauren Klein, Nora Toomey, Krystle Ahmadyar, Nicole Casanova, Vanessa Beggs, Jennifer Harper, Sarah Elena Palmer

### Friday April 12

The Chapel • 8pm \$10\$12  
Join us for a night of avant-garde roots music and funk-jazz-grass at The Chapel - San Francisco's newest music venue located in the heart of the Mission with the release of 3 brand-spankin' new CDs from the likes of Supermule + Dustbowl Revival + West Coast Ramblers.

Artists' Television Access • 8pm  
Wiggwaum (Randylee Sutherland, percussion; Doug Katelus, Hammond Organ & film; Matt Hartman, Electric Saxophone)  
Shelton/Forbes/Young/Heule (Aram Shelton: alto sax; Mike Forbes: tenor sax; Andrew Scott Young: bass; Jacob Felix Heule: drums)  
Headboggle (with video by Malocculsion Proto)

### Sunday April 14

Berkeley Arts Festival • 8pm \$10-20  
8pm: Lori Godston - cello, effects; Torbin Ulrich - voice [www.torbenuilrich.com](http://www.torbenuilrich.com)  
<http://www.lorigoldston.com/>  
9pm: Ackley / Mezzacappa / Mihaly Trio  
Bruce Ackley: saxophones and Bb clarinet  
Lisa Mezzacappa: contrabass  
Dave Mihaly: percussion

The trio has been playing together behind closed doors for about 3 years. This will be only their second live performance. The players are equally comfortable with composed and freely improvised material. Each will contribute new works for the Berkeley Arts Festival show.

### Monday April 15

The Layover • 7pm No Cover  
Oakland Freedom Jazz Society:  
Lisa Mezzacappa's monthly guitar trio residency @ the Layover  
Oro Blanco! with John Shiurba (guitar) and Gino Robair (drums)

### Wednesday April 17

Berkeley Arts Festival • 8pm \$10-20  
8pm: shudder  
Kyle Bruckmann - oboe, english horn  
Phillip Greenlief - tenor saxophone  
Lance Grabmiller - laptop, audiomulch, analog synthesizer  
9pm: Wobbly - circuits  
Zeena Parkins - electric harp, effects

### Thursday April 18

Luggage Store New Music Series • 8pm \$6-10  
8pm: Subnaught  
9pm: Ear Spray - synthesizing electronics, acoustic percussion, and voice into dynamic and strange aural landscapes and improvisations  
Carlos Jennings - electronics, Ann O'Rourke and Mark Pino - electronicized cymbals and Nunnish steel plate, found objects

### Friday April 19

The Garage • 8pm \$15  
Dancers Daria Kaufman, Bianca Brzezinski, and musician/composer Richard Warp present their own evening of original, boundary-breaking dance theater, improvisation, and live music at the Garage. The event features several cross-disciplinary works including the highly-acclaimed "ARTI ULATE," which won the award for Best Female Duet from BayAreaDanceWatch in 2012, as well as individual works by Bianca Brzezinski, Daria Kaufman, and special guest Peiling Kao.

### Saturday April 20

Mills College Art Museum • 1pm free  
Looking to cheer up your home or just clear out some space? Bring any completed or uncompleted artwork that you have lurking around your home or studio and swap it for new-to-you art! Full participation guidelines are available at [mcam.mills.edu](http://mcam.mills.edu).

edu. The Art Swap is presented in conjunction with Spontaneous Order: Senior Exhibition on view from April 2- 21, 2013.

### Sunday April 21

SIMM Series • 7:30pm \$10/\$8  
The Deconstruction Orchestra

Berkeley Arts Festival • 8pm \$10-20  
Bernal Hill Players  
Martha Rodríguez-Salazar, flute  
Leah diTullio, clarinet  
Jessica Ivry, cello  
Jennifer Peringer, piano  
Featuring works by Beethoven, Astor Piazzolla, Eduardo Gamba, Erik Pearson

### Wednesday April 24

Berkeley Arts Festival • 8pm \$10-20  
Burton Greene, solo piano and film  
This year Narada Burton Greene celebrates his 51st year as a professional composer/pianist. Starting at the beginning of free jazz with the Free Form Improvisation Ensemble (1963) in New York with bassist Alan Silva, He has gone on to many musical incarnations including contemporary classical, world musics including Indian ragas, balkan, klezmer and sephardic musics mixed with spontaneous jazz improvisations.

### Thursday April 25

Luggage Store New Music Series • 8pm \$6-10  
8pm: Ark of Bones  
9pm: The Grey Gentlemen

### Saturday April 27

The Crane House • 8pm \$6-\$10  
8pm: Wayne Grim - solo guitar  
9pm: Studio Finland Trio - Heikki Koskinen: Morrison digital trumpet, tenor recorder & piano; Steve Heckman: all saxophones, clarinets & flutes; Noah Schenker: bass

### Sunday April 28

Berkeley Arts Festival • 8pm \$10-20  
Dan Plonsey's DANIEL POPSICLE!

**BE MOST WELL-ROUNDED  
UNTO EACHOTHER**

## dude see also

[anouman.net/sfshows/](http://anouman.net/sfshows/) [scraper site]  
[creepsville.com/cal](http://creepsville.com/cal) [noise and weird music]  
[dardardar.org](http://dardardar.org) [shows under \$12]  
[jon.luini.com/thelist/](http://jon.luini.com/thelist/) [still!]  
[theiroldershittwasbetter.com](http://theiroldershittwasbetter.com) [it's true]

## venue information

**Artists' Television Access**  
992 Valencia St., San Francisco [at 21st]

**Battery Townsley**  
1 Mitchell Road Fort Cronkhite Marin Headlands

**Berkeley Arts Festival**  
2133 University Ave., Berkeley

**Berkeley Art Museum**  
2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley

**Bottom of the Hill**  
1233 17th Street, San Francisco

**The Chapel**  
777 Valencia Street, San Francisco

**The Crane House**  
Near Ashby BART (email [jacobmakesnoise@yahoo.com](mailto:jacobmakesnoise@yahoo.com) for address and directions)

**The Garage**  
715 Bryant Street, San Francisco

**The Layover**  
Franklin St, Oakland

**Lost Church**  
65 Capp Street, San Francisco

**Luggage Store Gallery**  
1007 Market Street, San Francisco [at 6th]

**Luna's Cafe & Juice Bar**  
1414 Sixteenth Street Sacramento

**Makeout Room**  
22nd Street, San Francisco [at Mission]

**Meridian Gallery**  
535 Powell Street, San Francisco

**Mills College**  
5000 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland

**Musicians' Union Hall**  
116 9th Street, San Francisco [at Mission]

**Oakland Museum of California**  
1000 Oak Street, Oakland

**Oakland Public Conservatory of Music**  
1616 Franklin Street, Oakland

**ODC Dance Theatre**  
3153 17th St., San Francisco [at Shotwell]

**Schoolhouse**  
5523 Santa Cruz Ave. Apt.1, Richmond

**Temescal Arts Center**  
511 48th Street, Oakland

**Turquoise Yantra Grotto**  
32 Turquoise Way, San Francisco

**Uptown**  
1928 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland

**the persistent caveat**  
Schedules are subject to change, and the reasons can be totally appalling, flying in the face of human reason. Please confirm details provided in this publication by visiting [transbaycalendar.org](http://transbaycalendar.org).

[www.transbaycalendar.org](http://www.transbaycalendar.org)