

# AURORA

a contemporary chamber collective

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presents:

## FREEFORM

a concert of improvised chamber music

Ty Bloomfield & Casey Boyer, co-directors

April 19, 2025 - Cady Room, Stearns Building  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Duration: approx. 40'

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Pauline Oliveros  
(1932 - 2016)

### **Four Meditations for Orchestra** (1996)

- I. From Unknown Silences
- II. The Tuning Meditation
- III. Interdépendance
- IV: Approaches and Departures

Kalliope Katsiris, flute  
Mattie Levy, oboe  
Noah Stoker, saxophone  
Aryn Nester, trombone  
Jake Ellzey, percussion  
Kirsten Lee, violin  
Casey Boyer, viola  
Max Healy, cello

Akari Komura  
(b. 1997)

### **in the language of the bloom** (2023)

Kalliope Katsiris, flute  
Noah Stoker, saxophone  
Casey Boyer, viola  
Nicole Knorr, piano

John Zorn  
(b. 1953)

### **Cobra** (1984)

Mattie Levy, oboe  
Noah Stoker, saxophone  
Jake Ellzey, percussion & guitar  
Nicole Knorr, piano  
Casey Boyer, viola  
Ty Bloomfield, prompter

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**Pauline Oliveros'** (1832 - 2016) life as a composer, performer and humanitarian was about opening her own and others' sensibilities to the universe and facets of sounds. Her career spanned fifty years of boundary dissolving music making. In the '50s she was part of a circle of iconoclastic composers, artists, poets gathered together in San Francisco. In the 1960's she influenced American music profoundly through her work with improvisation, meditation, electronic music, myth and ritual.

She was the recipient of four Honorary Doctorates and among her many recent awards were the William Schuman Award for Lifetime Achievement, Columbia University, New York, NY, The Giga-Hertz-Award for Lifetime Achievement in Electronic Music from ZKM, Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany and The John Cage award from the Foundation of Contemporary Arts.

Oliveros was Distinguished Research Professor of Music at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY, and Darius Milhaud Artist-in-Residence at Mills College. She founded "Deep Listening<sup>®</sup>," which came from her childhood fascination with sounds and from her works in concert music with composition, improvisation and electro-acoustics. She described Deep Listening as a way of listening in every possible way to everything possible to hear no matter what you are doing. Such intense listening includes the sounds of daily life, of nature, of one's own thoughts as well as musical sounds.

"Deep Listening is my life practice," Oliveros explained, simply. Oliveros founded Deep Listening Institute, formerly Pauline Oliveros Foundation, now the [Center For Deep Listening at Rensselaer](#), Troy, NY. Her creative work is currently disseminated through The Pauline Oliveros Trust and the [Ministry of Maât](#), Inc.

Each of the Four Meditations for Orchestra has been performed in versions for voices or smaller instrumental ensembles. There is no conventional notation used. The score consists of recipe-like instructions which are the same for each player. Each performer is responsible for their own part within the guidelines given. Since there is no written part to watch, all the performers' attention can be given to sound and invention. The shape of each meditation emerges from the nature of the score guidelines and the dynamic interplay of the orchestra members. There is no melody, no harmony and no metrical rhythm. The direction is sound-oriented. Each meditation has a specific focus.

From Unknown Silences is continuous variation on sounds. Each sound that each player makes is intended to be unique — different from all other sounds in the meditation. In The Tuning Meditation, players are asked to tune exactly to another player or to contribute a pitch which no one else is sounding. In Interdependence, reaction time is the focus — responding as quickly as possible. In Approaches and Departures, each player carries a specific pitch which is expressed or implied. Each player invents musical approaches and departures to their specific pitch. The boundary between composer and performer is greatly diminished in this work. The creative process is shared.

— note by the composer

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**Akari Komura** (b.1996) is a composer and intermedia artist from Tokyo, Japan. Her works center around contemplative mode of listening and soundmaking. She is interested in calling attention to the everyday space and blurring the boundaries of art/life, individual/collective, and performer/audience relationships. She is currently a Ph.D. composition student at the University of California San Diego.

This piece was written with reverence for the native inhabitants and environments among our lives. No matter where we are on the earth, we mutually reside within nature's vicinity. Yet, we sometimes overlook such a connection to the flora and fauna and get unmindful of experiencing the beauty that quietly grows, blooms, and withers. In the language of the bloom (2021) revolves around the idea of fostering and celebrating a harmonious relationship with nature. Prior to playing the piece, each performer has been invited to seek a wildflower and to be in dialogue with it by observing and meditating with its presence. Through musical improvisation, the performers imagine their ways to embody individual collected plants. The performance engages in the energies of the collective plants through the sonic expression of the color, shape, aura, and other imaginative qualities of the flowers.

— composer's note

John Zorn (b. 1953) is an American composer, conductor, saxophonist, arranger and producer who "deliberately resists category" American. His avant-garde and experimental approaches to composition and improvisation are inclusive of jazz, rock, Jewish Music hardcore, classical, contemporary, surf, metal, soundtrack, ambient, and world music. Rolling Stoner noted that "although Zorn has operated almost entirely outside the mainstream, he's gradually asserted himself as one of the most influential musicians of our time".

Cobra is an unpublished but recorded and frequently performed musical composition by John Zorn. Cobra was conceived as a system with very detailed rules but with no pre-conceived sequence of events (a "game piece") for a group of musical improvisers and a prompter. Zorn completed Cobra on October 9, 1984. The composition consists of a set of cues notated on cards, and rules corresponding to the cues that direct the players what to do in response to the cards. The number of players, instrumentation, and length of the piece is indeterminate, but a "prompter" is essential to the piece, holding the cards at his or her discretion and issuing other cues. Because there is no traditional musical notation and the players improvise, the piece may sound radically different from performance to performance. The title was inspired by a table-top war game published by TSR (publishers of Dungeons and Dragons).

— adapted from Wikipedia