



PERFORMING ARTS ORGANIZATION

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Frederic Rzewski and Del Sol Quartet play Rzewski

February 20, 2021, 6-8 pm

Event registration through Eventbrite - <http://bit.ly/3ro4MbK>, pay-what-you-can tickets

Produced by Del Sol String Quartet, featuring guest artist Frederic Rzewski and poet Genny Lim

The brilliant composer/pianist **Frederic Rzewski** joins Del Sol Quartet to present new online performances of Rzewski's compositions. *Words*, for string quartet, written for Del Sol in 2018, includes spoken texts from Brecht, Julian Beck, The Book of Samuel, Gorky, Giuseppe Chiari, Lewis Mumford, Checkov, and Rzewski himself. As the "legendarily contrarian" (Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*) Rzewski explains in his program note, "I just liked the idea of a talking string quartet. Why not?"

From his living room, Rzewski will play a recent piano composition *Winter Nights*, which he describes as "very gloomy. There are three of them, progressively more and more depressing."

Between musical performances, distinguished San Francisco author **Genny Lim** will contribute a reading of her poetry. Lim's translations of the anonymous Chinese poems left behind in the Angel Island Detention Center are an important part of the Del Sol [Angel Island Project](#) and an ongoing collaboration combining music with spoken word.

More about Frederic Rzewski

Frederic Rzewski was born in Westfield, Massachusetts in 1938. He had his first piano lessons at the age of three and began composing music at a very early age. He initially studied piano with Charles Mackey in Springfield and went on to study composition with Walter Piston (orchestration) and Randall Thompson at Harvard University and with Roger Sessions and Milton Babbitt at Princeton University, where he also took courses in philosophy and Greek. A Fulbright-Scholarship enabled him to study with Luigi Dallapiccola in Florence in 1960/61. His musical collaboration with Dallapiccola marked the beginning of his career as a pianist for contemporary piano music. He continued his studies with Elliot Carter in Berlin from 1963 to 1965. His friendship with Christian Wolff and David Behrman and his acquaintance with John



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Cage and David Tudor influenced his development, both as a composer and as a pianist. During the 1960s, Rzewski taught and took part in the first performances of Karlheinz Stockhausen's "Klavierstück X" (1962) and "Plus Minus" (1964). From 1977 to 2003, he was a professor for composition at the Conservatoire Royal in Liège/Belgium. He also taught at various other universities, among them Yale University, the California Institute of the Arts and the Berlin University of the Arts. Through the live electronics ensemble Musica Elettronica Viva, founded by Rzewski together with Alvin Curran and Richard Teitelbaum in Rome in 1966, he was introduced to politically active colleagues and jazz musicians. The music of the ensemble is distinguished by elements of improvisation and the use of electronic live instruments. The aim was to revolutionise contemporary thinking about classical composition and performance. These musical experiences with the ensemble are reflected in Rzewski's compositions of the late 1960s and the 1970s. They combine elements both from improvised and composed music. After his return to New York in the early 1970s, his politically outspoken compositions probably made it difficult for him to obtain a long-term teaching position in the US. Since 1976, he has been living mainly in Rome and Brussels. During the 1970s, he continued to experiment with forms that treat style and language as structural elements. His best-known work from the 1970s is "The People United Will Never Be Defeated!", a 50-minute-long composition featuring 36 piano variations on a song by Chilean composer Sergio Ortega. Today, Frederic Rzewski lives and works in Brussels.

More about Del Sol Quartet

Del Sol began as a thought on the night shift at Fermilab. Charlton Lee loved the cutting edge of physics research – always looking for the next discovery, pushing boundaries. But he missed the way music connected people, building community by communicating in ways physics never would. What if he could bring that scientific passion for exploration to a string quartet?

Twenty-six years later, Del Sol is still sharing music that brings out the endorphins. Music that asks why not?

Fascinated by the feedback loop between social change, technology, and artistic innovation, the San Francisco-based ensemble is a leading force in 21st century chamber music - whether introducing Ben Johnston's microtonal Americana at the Library of Congress, taking Aaron Garcia's gun-violence memorial to the streets of the Mission District, exploring Andean soundscapes with Gabriela Lena Frank and traditional musicians, or collaborating with Huang Ruo and the anonymous poets who carved their words into the walls of the Angel Island Immigration Station during the years of the Chinese Exclusion Act. The current Del Sol lineup, marked by the arrival of violinist Sam Weiser alongside mainstays Kathryn Bates and Ben Kreith, bring a fresh energy, freedom, and precision to the group.



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Recognized as a “vigorous champion of living composers”, Del Sol has premiered well over 100 works by composers including Terry Riley, Gabriela Lena Frank, Frederic Rzewski, Ben Johnston, Chinary Ung, Mason Bates, Tania León, Erberk Eryilmaz, Theresa Wong, Reza Vali, Mohammed Fairouz and Peter Sculthorpe. Many of these works are included on Del Sol’s nine critically-acclaimed albums. PopMatters praised Del Sol’s “unfettered mastery” on Terry Riley’s *Dark Queen Mantra* (2017, Sono Luminus). *Scrapyard Exotica* (2015) elicited this rave in the *New York Times*. “I could be wrong, but I’m guessing it’s been a while since you’ve rocked out to a string quartet recording. See if your foot can stay still once you put on this funky disc of rhythmically infectious (if often warped) music played by the adventurous Del Sol String Quartet.”

More about Genny Lim

Genny Lim is San Francisco Jazz Poet Laureate emeritus. She is author of five poetry collections, *Winter Place*, *Child of War*, *Paper Gods and Rebels*, *KRA!*, *La Morte Del Tempo*, and co-author of *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island*, winner of the American Book Award and the anthology of Senior Asian American memories, *Window: Glimpses of Our Storied Past*. Lim’s award-winning play, *Paper Angels* about Chinese immigrants detained on Angel Island during the Chinese Exclusion Act years has been presented in China, Canada and throughout the US.

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