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SASSAS

THE SOCIETY FOR THE ACTIVATION OF
SOCIAL SPACE THROUGH ART AND SOUND

Changes: Sixty-Four Studies for Six Harps

by James Tenney

Saturday November 11, 2017 at 8pm

The Box

FREE

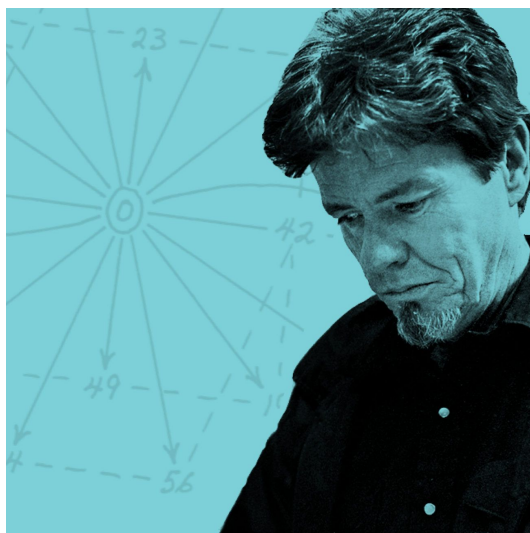


Photo by Rick McGinnis

The Society for the Activation of Social Space through Art and Sound (SASSAS) proudly presents the posthumous world premiere of James Tenney's ***Changes: Sixty-Four Studies for Six Harps***. This concert will be mounted at **The Box** in Los Angeles on November 11, 2017 and will be free to the public.

"Tenney was as close to experimental music royalty as a modern composer could get... to some extent, he was the ultimate Western composer. He approached each new piece as an adventure, with the goal of discovering original territory and, if need be, taming some theoretical musical beast or acoustical bugbear."

– Mark Swed, [Los Angeles Times](#).

Originally composed in 1985, ***Changes*** consists of six harps tuned a sixth of a semitone apart and played in complex interlocking hockets. A semitone is the distance between contiguous keys on a

piano, and a hocket is when a melody is divided between several instruments. Tenney generated the score by using the FORTRAN IV programming language to interpret each of the 64 hexagrams of the **I Ching**. While Tenney completed all 64 studies during his lifetime, only 16 were transcribed for performance when he passed in 2006. Since then, dedicated former students have worked to transcribe the remaining studies. With the task recently completed, the **Tenney Estate** has honored **SASSAS** with the opportunity to present this ambitious work. To realize this undertaking, **SASSAS** has enlisted Los Angeles' finest harpists and new music interpreters. Conducted by **Nicholas Deyoe**, the ensemble includes **Alison Bjorkedal**, **Ellie Choate**, **Liz Huston**, **Catherine Litaker**, **Amy Shulman**, and **Ruriko Terada**.

Changes is a highly unusual and demanding work to produce because it not only involves 6 harps, but each is also tuned a sixth of a semitone apart. At over two hours in length, **Changes** is a physical performance that envelopes its audience in an expanded microtonal palette and requires technical dexterity and stamina from its players. To create the unique ensemble, **SASSAS** worked with grammy winning harpist **Alison Bjorkedal**.

"In a way he stands at the center of American music, a kind of focal point: he studied and worked with seminal figures such as Varèse, Partch, Ruggles, Cage...; he performed in the ensembles of his contemporaries Philip Glass and Steve Reich; and he has taught some of the leading young composers, including John Luther Adams... No other composer is so revered by fellow composers, and so unknown to the public at large..."

– Kyle Gann, *American Music in the Twentieth Century*.

SASSAS has a long connection with James Tenney—he was an advisor to the organization from the time it was formed in 2002. Just prior to the creation of **SASSAS**, founder **Cindy Bernard** worked with Tenney on a concert of his own works for the sound. concert series which included **Having Never Written a Note for Percussion**. The 2002 performance of early works of **John Cage** curated by Tenney was the first sound. concert presented by **SASSAS**. In 2009, **SASSAS** presented **Tributaries: Dedicated to the Memory of James Tenney**, and in 2012 **SASSAS** presented his **Postal Pieces** as part of **Welcome Inn Time Machine**, part of **The Getty Foundation's Pacific Standard Time** art initiative.

"James Tenney's work, as a composer, theorist, performer and teacher, is of singular importance in American music of the last twenty-five years."

– Larry Polansky, *The Early Works of James Tenney*.

Tenney's influence on American music is vast; including contributions to Minimalism, Fluxus, microtonal music (assisted **Harry Partch**), early computer music (first composer in residence at **Bell Laboratories**), and exploration of timbral variety (studied with **Edgar Varese**).

Tenney's work inspired multiple generations of musicians, composers and sound artists; his past students include **Peter Garland**, **Chas Smith**, **John Bischoff**, and Pulitzer Prize winner **John Luther Adams**. He was **Distinguished Research Professor** at **York University**, where he taught for

twenty-four years, and last held the **Roy E. Disney Family Chair in Musical Composition** at the **California Institute of the Arts**.

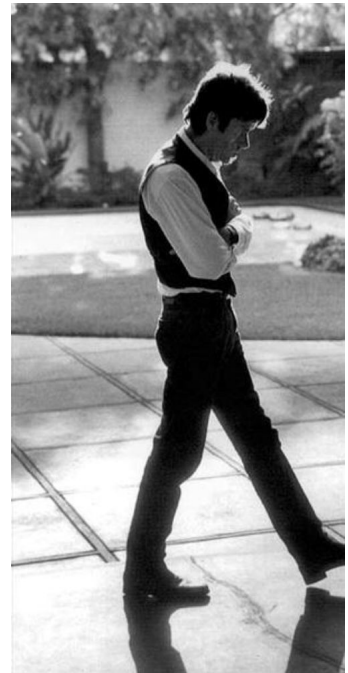
Tenney also had a long history with the visual arts. He was a childhood friend and lifelong collaborator with filmmaker **Stan Brakhage**, and scored Brakhage's first film *Interim*. Married to **Carolee Schneeman** from 1959 to 1968, Tenney was featured in several of her films, including *Fuses*, *Meat Joy*, and *Viet Flakes* (for which he composed the music). He participated in numerous premieres of Fluxus event scores, and taught computer programming classes for artists that were attended by **Nam June Paik**, **Dick Higgins**, **Alison Knowles**, and **Jackson Mac Low**. He also performed in the premiere of **Steve Reich's** landmark *Pendulum Music*, alongside **Richard Serra**, **Bruce Nauman**, and **Michael Snow**.

The concert begins at 8pm on Saturday, November 11, 2017 at the Box Gallery, located at 805 Traction Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

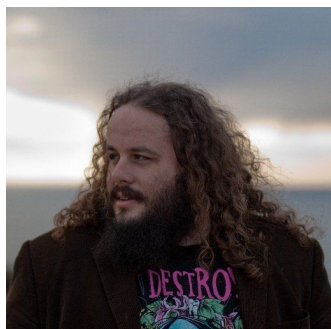
[MORE INFO](#)

JAMES TENNEY

James Tenney (1934–2006) was born in Silver City, New Mexico, and grew up in Arizona and Colorado, where he received his early training as a pianist and composer. He attended the University of Denver, the Juilliard School of Music, Bennington College (B.A. 1958), and the University of Illinois (M.A. 1961). His teachers and mentors included Eduard Steuermann, Chou Wen-Chung, Lionel Nowak, Carl Ruggles, Lejaren Hiller, Kenneth Gaburo, Edgard Varèse, Harry Partch, and John Cage. A performer as well as a composer and theorist, he was co-founder and conductor of the Tone Roads Chamber Ensemble in New York City (1963-70). He was a pioneer in the field of electronic and computer music, working with Max Mathews and others at the Bell Telephone Laboratories in the early 1960s to develop programs for computer sound-generation and composition. He wrote works for a variety of media, both instrumental and electronic, many of them using alternative tuning systems. He was the author of several articles on musical acoustics, computer music, and musical form and perception, as well as two books: *META + HODOS: A Phenomenology of 20th-Century Musical Materials* and *An Approach to the Study of Form* (1961; Frog Peak, 1988) and *A History of 'Consonance' and 'Dissonance'* (Excelsior, 1988). A teacher since 1966, he was Distinguished Research Professor at York University (Toronto), where he taught for twenty-four years, and last held the Roy E. Disney Family Chair in Musical Composition at the California Institute of the Arts. His music is published and distributed by Sonic Art Editions (Baltimore), Frog Peak (Lebanon, New Hampshire), and the Canadian Music Centre, and has been recorded on the Artifact, col legno, CRI, Hat[now]ART, Koch International, Mode, Musicworks, New World, Nexus, oodiscs, Soundprints, SYR, and Toshiba EMI labels.



NICHOLAS DEYOE (CONDUCTOR)



[Nicholas Deyoe](#) is a Los Angeles based composer, conductor, and guitarist, and is the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of the [wasteLAnd](#) concert series. His music has been called “intriguingly complex and excitedly lush” by the LA Times. Drawn to sounds that are inherently physical, Nicholas strives to create music that engages listeners intellectually and emotionally by appealing to their inner physicality. His compositions combine uses of noise, delicacy, drama, fantasy, brutality, and lyricism to create a diverse sonic experience. As a guitarist, Nicholas strives to further the already vast sound world of the electric guitar by experimenting with

microtonal tunings, preparation, bows, and beer cans. He has received commissions from The Los Angeles Philharmonic Association, Carnegie Hall, USINESONORE Festival, The La Jolla Symphony, Palimpsest, and several soloists. His music has been performed in throughout North America, Europe, and Japan. As a conductor, Nicholas has performed with wasteLAnd, The Ensemble at CalArts, The La Jolla Symphony Orchestra, Red Fish Blue Fish, Ensemble Ascolta, The Darmstadt Preisträgerensemble, Noise, The University of Northern Colorado Symphony Orchestra, and many ad-hoc ensembles in the United States and Germany. He holds a Ph.D. in composition from UC San Diego where he studied with Roger Reynolds. Deyoe’s compositions and improvisations can be heard on Sono Luminus, Populist, Spektral, Khajila, and Eh? Records. Nicholas is currently on faculty at California Institute of the Arts where he conducts The Ensemble and teaches composition.

ALISON BJORKEDAL (HARP)



Grammy-award winning musician [Alison Bjorkedal](#) is an avid ambassador for both her instrument, the harp, and contemporary music. Her playing has been described by the LA Times as “excellent” and “alluring” and her world premieres include chamber and solo works by William Kraft, Anne LeBaron and Wadada Leo Smith. Alison has performed with the WildUP, LA Opera, Long Beach Opera, San Diego Symphony, Long Beach Symphony, and Pasadena Symphony, as well as being active in the recording industry. She is harp faculty at Pasadena City College, Azusa Pacific University, and CalArts. In addition to the harp, Alison plays the Kithara (an instrument created for the music of Harry Partch) with LA-based ensemble Partch.

ELLIE CHOATE (HARP)



Ellie Choate has worked on musical scores for numerous major motion pictures and recordings, appeared on camera for movies and television shows, and is an active soloist and chamber musician all across Southern California and internationally. Her chamber experience include the California Concert Artists, Hutchins Consort, and CalArts New Century Players conducted by Pierre Boulez for the Ojai Festival (2003) and for the Ernst Fleischman Memorial at Disney Hall (2012). In addition to her private studio, Ellie is on the applied music faculty at UC Irvine,

CSU Fullerton, and CSU Long Beach Cole Conservatory. She has served the harp and string community as First Vice President and Chairman of the 2005 and 2013 Summer Institutes for the American Harp Society, Inc., and as President of the Greater Los Angeles Section of the American

String Teachers Association. She has conducted master classes and workshops on arranging, rhythm and pedagogy for the Los Angeles and Dallas chapters of the American Harp Society, AHS and ASTA national conferences, the biennial *Harp in Worship* conference at Azusa Pacific University, with Norman Ludwin at Local 47 A.F.M., and for the Composers' Guild at California State University, Fresno. Ellie is a founding member of The American Harp Quartet and Pangelica Duo, performing regularly throughout the country.

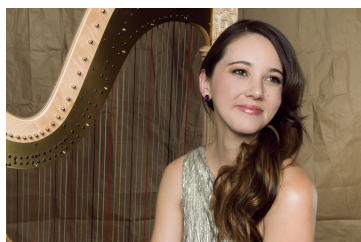
LIZ HUSTON (HARP)



[Elizabeth Huston](#) has been a champion of contemporary harp music for the majority of her career. A new transplant to Los Angeles, Elizabeth relocated from Philadelphia in the spring of 2017. Elizabeth's organization, A Change of Harp, creates and produces multi-sensory performances of contemporary harp music. Her latest series, Composit, showcases large sets of works, seldom performed because of their scale, including the shows 14 Sequenzas, 10 Synchronisms, and, her largest undertaking to date, Stockhausen's KLANG. A Change of Harp, in partnership with El Sistema USA and the Lyra Society, provides free harp lessons for Philadelphia's inner city school

children. Elizabeth is continuing these initiatives from afar, but is working to bring them to her new home in Los Angeles.

CATHERINE LITAKER (HARP)



[Catherine Yom Litaker](#) is an avid soloist, chamber musician and orchestral harpist. She has performed on countless stages all across the globe including Western Europe, South America, North America and Asia. She currently performs as a freelance harpist in and around Los Angeles, CA. She has performed with many Orchestras including: Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Diego Symphony, Ars Viva Symphony, Dubuque Symphony and Quad City Symphony

Orchestra. Catherine is currently an active substitute for Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera of Chicago and San Diego Symphony. She was also Principal Harp of Civic Orchestra of Chicago during the 2010 - 2012 season. She has always been active in performing chamber music and is a founding member of the Chicago Harp Quartet; a dynamic group aiming to expand the repertoire and exposure of the harp by bringing a high level of harp chamber music to the stage. Among other accomplishments the quartet has performed for audiences across the US, is commissioning new works, working with living composers and is now working on it's second album.

AMY SHULMAN (HARP)



[Amy Shulman](#), harpist, received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the Juilliard School of Music. She has performed as a soloist in France, Canada and the USA including live television and radio broadcasts in Paris, New York and Los Angeles. She toured nationally on the Columbia Artists CAMI Recital Series for several seasons with violinist Peter Kent, they premiered over fifteen works written for their violin and harp duo, "51 Strings". In Los Angeles, Ms Shulman has performed with several orchestral, chamber,

opera and contemporary music groups including the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Opera and the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Very active as a recording harpist in the motion picture, television and record industries, she has appeared and recorded with numerous artists including Placido Domingo, Andrea Bocelli, Van Dyke Parks and Pierre Boulez. Last season she was the harp soloist in the Los Angeles premiere of Frank Martin's "Petite Symphonie Concertante for harp, harpsichord, piano and double string orchestra". She has been on the music faculty of Occidental College since 2003.

RURIKO TERADA (HARP)



Ruriko Terada, 23, born in San Diego, is an Artist Diploma candidate at the Colburn Conservatory of Music, where she studies with JoAnn Turovsky. As an orchestral performer, she has been appointed as a principal harpist at numerous festival orchestras including Music Academy of the West (2012, 2014) and Spoleto International Festival USA (2017). Ms. Terada is an active principal harpist at the Colburn Conservatory Orchestra, Colburn Youth Symphony Orchestra, and Colburn Youth Band Orchestra. She has also been in a position of a principal and co-principal harp position at the American Youth Symphony, Debut Young Musicians Foundation Orchestra, Los Angeles Youth Orchestra, Santa Monica Symphony, California State University–Fullerton Symphony Orchestra and many others.

ABOUT SASSAS

[The Society for the Activation of Social Space through Art and Sound \(SASSAS\)](#) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization serving as a catalyst for the creation, presentation and recognition of experimental art and sound practices in the Greater Los Angeles area. SASSAS is unique among local experimental music organizations in its site informed programming, its bridging of visual art and sound communities, its commitment to pay artists and its free programming. Programs include the [sound](#) concert series; [soundShoppe](#), a monthly workshop for experimental musicians; [soundSpark](#), a monthly series for young children featuring solo and duo performances by emerging experimental musicians, and the [online concert archives](#).

THE BOX

Since opening in 2007, [The Box's](#) mission has been to create a diverse art program surveying historical artists and their contemporaries. By exhibiting artists of multiple generations, the gallery has established a discursive critical voice in addressing and viewing varying perspectives of art within the larger context of contemporary artistic practices. Covering a time span of nearly five decades, our artists have dealt with the historical elements that have been integral to the development of art today. Whereas younger artists supply a fresh mode of thinking, artists belonging to past generations provide a historical basis in which to contextualize the expansive development of art today.

Presented with support from [The Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts](#).



Enriching Lives



For press reservations or more information, please email Daniel Corral at daniel@sassas.org

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