



Old First Concerts

presents

Alisa Rose, *violin*

with

Americana String Quartet

Matthew Szemela & Nigel Armstrong, *violins*

Alexandra Simpson, *viola* & Matt Park, *cello*

Fog Holler

Casey Holmberg, Tommy Schulz & Noa

Sunday, September 19, 2021 at 4 PM

Old First Church

1751 Sacramento St. at Van Ness Ave.

San Francisco, CA 94109

(415) 474-1608 www.oldfirstconcerts.org

ABOUT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

- Great venue for music with beautiful acoustics and amazing Steinway concert grand piano.
- Primarily local emerging and mid-career professional musicians presenting innovative programs.
- Every concert offers new insights and virtuosic performances.
- Complimentary refreshments served at intermission or after the concert.
- An independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization devoted to presenting music at affordable prices, especially for low-income seniors and students.
- Solo, chamber music, and world music concerts year-round since 1970.

DONATING TO OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Ticket sales provide about 38 percent of our operating revenue each year. In addition, we rely on support from private foundations and Grants for the Arts from the city of San Francisco. Our generous individual donors complete the picture. We invite you to join us in our mission to connect audiences and local musicians and build up the classical music and world music scene in San Francisco. Donations are tax-deductible and donating on our website is easy and secure: www.oldfirstconcerts.org/give/, or checks can be mailed to: Old First Concerts, 1751 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. Thank you!

COVID-19 RESPONSE: RETURNING TO THE MUSIC

Old First Concerts is committed to the health and safety of our audiences, performers and staff. We look forward to having audiences back in our space when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we are happy to be able to continue presenting artists of the highest caliber to our audience in the Bay Area—and beyond—via livestreamed events. We are following city guidelines and safety protocols to help ensure the safest possible environment for our performers and staff.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Following us on **Facebook** is a great way to keep informed about the latest concert information. While you are there, don't forget to **share** events with your friends and hit the "Like" button liberally. [facebook.com/oldfirstconcerts/](https://www.facebook.com/oldfirstconcerts/)

You can also find us on **Instagram** [@oldfirstconcerts](https://www.instagram.com/oldfirstconcerts) with information about upcoming events plus photos and videos from our concerts.

PROGRAM

Fog Holler

Casey Holmberg, *banjo/vocals*
Tommy Schulz, *resonator guitar/vocals*
Noa, *bass fiddle*

Noa (b. 1990)

Buffalo Funeral

Tommy Schulz (b. 1990)

The Greener Grass Shuffle

Noa

The Found Family Waltz

Casey James Holmberg (b. 1992)

Weary Traveler

Casey James Holmberg & Noa

Bodega Rock

Casey James Holmberg

Spanish Moss

Noa

Flowers in Her Hair

Alisa Rose and the Americana Quartet

Alisa Rose, *solo violin*
Matthew Szemela and Nigel Armstrong, *violins*
Alexandra Simpson, *viola* & Matt Park, *cello*

Alisa Rose (b. 1979)

Embracing Roots for Quartet and Solo Violin

World Premiere

Misterioso - Allegro Brusco

Andante con movimento

Allegro energico

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Embracing Roots is named in recognition of all those who search for a home within bluegrass. It celebrates the work of Bluegrass Pride around inclusion. This work started with conversations with six diverse members of Bluegrass Pride about their experiences in and hopes for the bluegrass community. The common emotional themes in their stories inspired the music and excerpts from the interviews on these themes will be played before each movement.

The first movement draws on a common theme across the interviews: the joy of discovering bluegrass and the way in which its' traditions can both conflict and connect with one's identity. As you listen to the second movement, listen for the composers' take on the loneliness of exclusion and the feeling of not being enough. What does it feel like to carve out your own space within a community? The third movement seeks to express the boldness of embracing one's individuality and the joy of expressing one's authentic voice within a community.

Many thanks to Kara Kundert, executive director of Bluegrass Pride for conducting interviews and Justin Hiltner, Franco Martino, and four anonymous contributors for sharing their stories.

This work was created with the support of the San Francisco Arts Commission Individual Artist Grant.

ABOUT THE MUSICIANS

Grammy-nominated violinist and composer **Alisa Rose** is a modern musician who easily navigates between many musical styles. With roots in classical music as well as the rich American musical folk traditions, her stylistic fluidity gives her the ability to create unique music which is free from the constraints of genre.

Alisa Rose has been featured in ensembles that encompassed her love of both roots music and classical chamber music, including the modern-folk ensemble Real Vocal String Quartet (U.S. Department of State Cultural Ambassadors), classical crossover stars Quartet San Francisco (Grammy-nominated), bluegrass band 49 Special (Rockygrass Band Contest Winners), and in her current contemporary roots duo, Scroggins & Rose (Freshgrass Album Fund Awardees).

Notable performances include Carnegie Hall, NPR's *Weekend Edition*, California Report, Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival, Stern Grove Festival, TEDx Alcatraz with Bob Weir, Nikkei Hall in Tokyo as well as in concert with the San Jose Chamber Orchestra, Marin and Tulsa Symphonies and international tours in the United Kingdom, China, South Korea, Japan, and Turkey.

Alisa teaches privately as well as at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where she received her B.M. and M.M. in Chamber Music studying with Camilla Wicks and Bettina Mussumeli.

Fog Holler is a fast-growing sensation in the world of bluegrass and acoustic music, born from an intense love of early country and traditional American music shared by Casey Holmberg, Tommy Schulz, and Noa. Discovered

playing on the streets by Grammy award-winning artist Laurie Lewis, their innovative sound and energetic punk rock spirit has enthralled audiences across the world. The group's original music synthesizes sincere, poignant writing with the austere, spiritual vocal stylings and harmonies of brother duos like the Stanley Brothers and the Blue Sky Boys. Fog Holler has toured in the U.S, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, and Switzerland and has shared stages with acts like Laurie Lewis & The Right Hands, Jerry Douglas & The Earls of Leicester, The Po' Ramblin Boys, The Kathy Kallick Band, The Watkins Family Hour, and The Del McCoury Band.

Americana Quartet

Praised by *The New York Times* for his "outrageous fiddling," **Matthew Szemela** is a violinist who crosses musical genres with ease. He has performed as soloist, chamber and orchestral musician in several renowned concert halls both domestically (Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully, Merkin Recital Hall, Library of Congress, Kennedy Center), and abroad (Japan, China, Korea, Belgium, Luxembourg, Australia, Italy). Matthew has collaborated, recorded, and performed with a myriad of artists including Jay-Z, Beyonce, Rihanna, Savion Glover, Sting, Lana Del Rey, Josh Groban, Placido Domingo, Bob Weir, Dave Stewart, Billy Childs, Lisa Fischer, Johnny Mathis, Andrea Bocelli, and Olivia Newton John. In the fall of 2007 Matthew portrayed an Irish rock violinist in the Warner Brothers film *August Rush*, working with famed music producer Phil Ramone. TV appearances include *Good Morning America* (with Josh Groban), *The View* (with Rihanna), and *American Idol* (with Lana Del Rey).

Nigel Armstrong is emerging as a dynamic and creative artist both within and beyond the realm of classical music. From his musical beginnings as a member of The Little Fiddlers in

Sonoma to collaborations with tango musicians in Argentina and solo performances with orchestras on four continents he's enjoyed using the violin in a versatile manner throughout his life. As soloist Nigel has performed with orchestras such as the Dusseldorf Symphony, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, YOA Orchestra of the Americas, and the Boston Pops, and with conductors including Sir Neville Marriner and Carlos Miguel Prieto.

Alexandra Simpson has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in a broad range of settings, from playing with Kygo at Outside Lands to performing for the Colombian President Ivan Duque. She has studied with the world's leading viola teachers, including Kim Kashkashian at New England Conservatory, Ettore Causa at Yale School of Music, and Dimitri Murrath at San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and played at such festivals as Tanglewood, Prussia Cove International Musicians' Seminar, and Kneisel Hall. She was recently featured as a soloist with the Camellia Symphony and has performed chamber music with renowned musicians such as Tessa Lark, Jennifer Pike, Owen Dalby, Norman Fisher, and Ian Swensen.

Cellist **Matthew Park**, a native of Los Angeles is currently pursuing his Artist Diploma in Chamber Music at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music under Jennifer Culp. As a chamber musician he has collaborated with renowned musicians such as the American String Quartet, members of the Telegraph Quartet, Owen Dalby of the St. Lawrence String Quartet among others. He is a member of Splntrd Wood, a cello ensemble that performs their own daring arrangements that bridges the gap between all genres of music. Matthew was a section cellist of the New West Symphony and has served on faculty at the Gold Coast Chamber Music Festival.

Fog Holler

Casey James Holmberg, *banjo/vocals*, was born and raised in Petaluma. Although a saxophonist first, Holmberg removed the mouthpiece and started pickin' it true after hearing Earl Scruggs play *The Farewell Blues*. Convinced the banjo was the best instrument for Bluegrass and Bop, he began to teach himself. After studying briefly with Tim Weed in Point Reyes, Casey saw the banjo used as a complete instrument, not restricted by genre or style. He furthered his studies in music at UCLA while pursuing a degree in theater.

Tommy Schulz, *resonator guitar/ vocals*, was born and raised in the lush mountain forests of Makiki in Honolulu. Constantly surrounded by Hawaiian slack key guitar and country and bluegrass from his father's stereo, Tommy took to playing folk music on the acoustic guitar at a young age. He studied operatic singing technique and continued to hone his guitar playing and songwriting before moving to Los Angeles to study performance at UCLA. Tommy scored theater and film and studied various musical and theatrical styles including traditional West African drumming, traditional Japanese theater and music and old time/Americana during his years in Southern California. Tommy works to incorporate new rhythms, contemporary lyrics and theatrical elements to rock, metal, folk, electronic, bluegrass and any traditional musical style that catches his interest.

Bassist and composer **Noa** grew up in Buffalo, New York. After graduating from SUNY University at Buffalo with a bachelor's in music performance, she furthered her studies at UCLA where she studied with Chris Hanulik and received their master's degree, also in music performance. A self-taught composer, Noa seeks to write music that is both immediately accessible to the listener while synthesizing diverse sounds and styles in an organic way.

COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Current: A Piano Festival

presented by Old First Concerts and The Ross McKee Foundation

Saturday, September 11 at 8 pm—The Illustrated Pianist

Distinctive new works by accomplished composing pianists combining science-fiction and adaptive visual installation.

Friday, September 17 at 8pm—Cross Rhythms

An eclectic program of music for piano performed by some of the Bay Area's favorite pianists.

Saturday, September 25 at 8 pm—Stephen Prutsman

Pairing music of J. S. Bach with Progressive Rock classics by Gentle Giant, Yes, and Genesis.

Friday, October 1 at 8 pm—Ninth Planet

A program exploring themes of realism and surrealism, featuring the world premiere of a work by Bay Area resident Assaf Shatil, plus works by Shelley Washington, Yaz Lancaster, and Amy Beth Kirsten.

Sunday, October 3 at 4 pm—*Fusion Soul*

A dialogue between Karlton Hester's expressive works engaging themes of creative freedom and Hwayoung Shon's work drawing from Korean traditions leads to a transcontinental collaboration of Miseon Jeong's *Fusion Soul*, dramatizing the fusion of jazz and Korean music into one.

Friday, October 15 at 8 pm

Ensemble for These Times: *Alchemy*

Nanette McGuinness, *soprano*; **Abigail Monroe**, *cello*; **Margaret Halbig**, *piano*, with special guest **Chelsea Hollow**, *coloratura soprano*

The award-winning E4TT performs World Premieres by Brennan Stokes and Mary Bianco alongside works focusing on identity and transformation by Marcus Norris, Coleridge Taylor Perkinson, Lisa Bielawa, Darian Donovan Thomas, Julia Perry, George Walker, and more!

COMING UP AT OLD FIRST CONCERTS

Friday, October 22 at 8 pm—Dorisiya Yosifova, *violin*

A World Premiere based entirely on Bulgarian folklore tradition by Jillian Honorof, plus works by Dora Pejacevid & Amy Beach.

Sunday, October 24 at 4 pm—Ives Collective

Roy Malan, *violin*; Susan Freier, *violin & viola*; Stephen Harrison, *cello*; Gwendolyn Mok, *piano*

The Ives Collective presents powerful live music experiences through fresh and informed interpretations of established masterworks and underappreciated gems, in this program featuring works by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Erwin Schulhoff, and Johannes Brahms.

Sunday, November 7 at 4 pm—Ting Luo, *piano*—*Poetic Move*

Pianist Ting Luo gives the World Premieres of a series of works for solo piano and immersive visuals by living composers in Bay Area and beyond, including Danny Clay, Chatori Shimizu, and Jean Ahn, in collaboration with visual artists including Charles Woodman and Jo Ho. “External and internal spaces began to blend, allowing dreams, memories, and fragments to be unearthed and brought into the light.” – Nicki Davis (NAC Visual Collaborator)

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Old First Concerts' piano is a New York Steinway D model, circa 1980, with Hamburg action. It was donated by The Stanley Ibler Fund, and is maintained by David Love Piano Service and Restoration.