



Advance Program Notes

Cipher

Samita Sinha

Saturday, October 11, 2014, 7:30 PM

Sunday, October 12, 2014, 2 PM

These Advance Program Notes are provided online for our patrons who like to read about performances ahead of time. Printed programs will be provided to patrons at the performances. Programs are subject to change.

Cipher

Produced by **MAPP International Productions**

Created and performed by **Samita Sinha**

Lighting design/director of production: **Christopher Kuhl**

Sound design: **Dave Sharma**

Visual and scenic designer: **Dani Leventhal**

Costume designer: **Anna Telcs**

Artistic advisor: **Toumas Laitinen**

Lighting design assistant: **Devin Cameron**

Order of Movements

breath lines

threadb(e)are(r): a blues

i ink

ii thunder

iii blue sky gravity

three and one

love song

Artist Statement

There is a thread that runs through the chaotic multitude of eras and cultures and energies that inhabit us.

The voice becomes this thread in *Cipher*.

By unraveling Indian music (raga, specifically *khayal*) into fundamental principles—of tone, rhythm, line, embodiment, and language—I create a compositional language for ciphering, a hybrid of vocal music and performance. The voice unspools and communicates within analog and digital soundscapes of rhythms and drones. Certain sounds have meaning as objects as well as sonically.

Cipher is the bottom of what moves the voice to utter, and the transparent surface where we see its shapes. Recovering instinct, I sink voice into body and let body emerge through voice, unraveling the self as I unravel form. New forms arise as containers for the twin unravelings, borne of what is not yet written.

Funding Credits

Cipher is a production of MAPP International Productions. It has been commissioned by the National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund project and co-commissioned by Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA) in partnership with REDCAT, Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University, Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech, and NPN. The Creation Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. *Cipher* has also received support from NPN's Forth Fund, which is supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. *Cipher* was developed in part with the support of BRIC (Brooklyn, N.Y.), Atlas Center for the Performing Arts (Washington, D.C.), and Topaz Arts (Queens, N.Y.). It has received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Cipher has also received invaluable support from individual donors: Marion Kaplan, Stephen Cowan, Arnie Zimmerman, Kenneth and Kathaleen Lang, Solé Pierce, Irene Krugman, Lois Gudeon Sloan, and other individuals. A special acknowledgement to Sam Sweet for his generous support and contribution to *Cipher*.

Artist's Acknowledgements

Cipher is a "solo" work that would not have been possible without an army of people. My deep gratitude to Dani Leventhal, Dave Sharma, Chris Kuhl, Anna Telcs, and Tuomas Laitinen for gracefully co-shaping the whole. To MAPP: Cathy Zimmerman for going above and beyond, Joyce Lawler, Rasu Jilani, Michelle Coe, Julia Gutiérrez-Rivera, and Jonathan Kitt for unconditional support and heroic efforts. To Laetitia Sonami, Daria Fain, Ralph Lemon, and Stephen Cowan for profound guidance; to Shubhangi Sakhalkar, Alka Dev Marulkar, and Shiv Shankar Pandey for profound musical foundations. To Sekou Sundiata. To Monica Kim for this space and Maximilian Balduzzi for faith; to Jesse Harold, Isaac Cheng, Aram Jibilian, Julia Ulehla, Bonnie Jones, and Andrew Zimmerman for living alongside and witnessing. To Tongues in Trees for music. To Bob Bielecki and Marc Cary for tech wizardry. To BRIC, especially Emily Harney; Topaz Arts; Rubin Museum; and Panoply Performance Lab, Watermill, and Marion Kaplan. And finally to Sikha and Awadhesh Sinha, Didi, and Dipu for giving me life and love.

Biographies

SAMITA SINHA

Samita Sinha combines tradition with experiment to create bold new forms, combining a deep grounding in North Indian classical vocal music with jazz, electronic, folk, and ritual music in multiple languages. Her compositions include scores for Fiona Templeton's performance epic, *The Medead* (2012); Parijat Desai Dance Company's *Make Space* (2010); and Jaishri Abichandani's multimedia work *Three Muses* (2006). She has performed her solo projects at Center for Performance Research, Chocolate Factory, Issue Project Room, Roulette, and The Stone (all New York City); at Watermill Center (New York), Kelly-Strayhorn Theater (Pennsylvania), Macalaster College (Minnesota), and UC Berkeley; and in Delhi and Assam, India. Her awards include grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, Queens Council on the Arts, Urban Arts Initiative, and a Fulbright Scholarship, as well as residencies with Atlas Performing Arts Center (Washington, D.C.), BRICLab (New York), Coleman Center for the Arts (Alabama), Millay Colony for the Arts (New York), Ohio State University, and The Watermill Center (New York).

As a vocalist, Sinha has toured internationally with Sekou Sundiata's *the 51st (dream) state*; in a 2011 revival of Robert Ashley's *That Morning Thing*; and with Daria Fain and Robert Kocik's Commons Choir (which she also vocal directed). Her newest ensemble project is *Tongues in Trees*, a trio with Sunny Jain and guitarist Grey McMurray. Earlier ensembles include her Indo-jazz collective, Kaash, and composer/pianist Marc Cary's Focus Trio (electro-acoustic jazz) and Anatomy (electronic music). Committed to combining art and civic practice, Sinha has devised and led social singing rituals that bring together diverse groups of people in varied public settings, including a series of Peoples' Potlucks through New York City; the Community Coalition Choir in York, Alabama; and Community Sings in her Queens neighborhood. The development of her new work, *Cipher*, includes the Exploring Your Voice workshops for young women of color in New York City.

CHRISTOPHER KUHL

Christopher Kuhl is a lighting, scenic, installation, and conceptual designer for new performance, theatre, dance, and opera. Recent work includes *Voices of Strength: A Mini Festival of Contemporary Dance & Theater by Women from Africa* (Produced MAPP International Production); *HOLOSCENES* and *ABACUS* with Early Morning Opera (Sundance Film Festival, EMPAC); *The Elephant Room* with Rainpan 43 (Philly Live Arts, Arena Stage, St. Ann's Warehouse, and Center Theatre Group); *Quartier Libres* by Nadia Beugré (New York Live Arts); *Soldier Songs* (Prototype Festival); *The Nether, The Author and Eclipsed* (Center Theatre Group); *John Cage Song Books* with San Francisco Symphony (Carnegie Hall); *Under Polaris* with Cloud Eye Control (REDCAT, EXIT Festival Paris, and Fusebox Festival); *Watch her not know it now* by Meg Wolfe (REDCAT); *Motherhood Out Loud* (Primary Stages and The Geffen); *How to Completely Disappear*, for which Kuhl won an Ovation Award (Boston Court Theatre); and *Everyone Who Looks Like You, Undine, and My Mind Is Like An Open Meadow* (Hand2Mouth Theatre). Kuhl was lighting director for Ralph Lemon's *How Can You Stay In The House All Day And Not Go Anywhere?* and has also had the pleasure of working and making art at On the Boards, The Kennedy Center, The Walker, The Krannert Center, YBCA, Portland Center Stage, Hartford Stage, Dallas Theatre Center, BAM, Jacob's Pillow, LA Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Beijing Music Festival, Queer Zagreb, KVS Belgium, MAC France, Santiago a Mil Chile, Reed College, Columbia College, and Duke University. In 2011 Kuhl was the recipient of the Sherwood, Drammy, Horton, and Ovation Awards. Kuhl is originally from New Mexico and is a graduate of CalArts.

Biographies, continued

DAVE SHARMA

Producer/percussionist Dave Sharma has spent a decade consistently working on boundary-pushing projects in New York City and abroad. As a producer and writer, he has worked on projects with Kendra Foster (D'Angelo/George Clinton); Arama Brown (Hannah Montana); Jason Castro (American Idol); DJ Rekha (Basement Bhangra); Brazilian vocalist Zuzuka Poderosa; Canadian band Delhi 2 Dublin; and the independent film, *A Decent Arrangement*. As a percussionist, Sharma can be found touring everywhere from the Montreal Jazz Fest to Barcelona with the 17-member-strong Brooklyn disco orchestra Escort; he also performs on drumset and electronics with techno balladeer MNDR. In 2008 he played drumset and percussion with electronic artist Moby, including at Wembley Stadium and Rock: Werchter. Sub Swara, his own co-lead group, has been recognized by *Rolling Stone*, the BBC, *Pitchfork*, and the *Fader* for bridging electronic music with organic elements. As a solo electronic artist and DJ, his releases have been profiled by *DJ* magazine and numerous blogs. Additionally, Sharma was a featured player in both the Broadway and national tour productions of A.R. Rahman and Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Bombay Dreams*, and subsequently worked on the development of Disney's *Tarzan: The Musical*. Sharma is a teaching artist with both Carnegie Hall's Musical Connections program and the Mark Morris Dance Group's outreach program; performing to underserved communities in New York City. As part of the Musical Connections program, he co-led a songwriting workshop with fellow artist Falu and Found Sound Nation in late 2011 at the Crossroads Juvenile Detention Center in Brooklyn, New York. He is a tabla student of Pdt. Samir Chatterjee at the Chhandayan Center of Indian Music, where he also teaches.

DANI LEVENTHAL

Dani Leventhal, scenic and visual designer, employs a process of accumulation and excision to create videos and drawings that unearth a curious beauty in the minutiae of everyday life. In 2003 she received a master's of fine arts in sculpture from the University of Illinois at Chicago and in 2009 a master's of fine arts in film/video from Bard College. She has screened her work at The Rotterdam International Film Festival, The Gene Siskel Film Center, PS1, and Anthology Film Archives. Leventhal has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards, among them the Wexner Center Film/Video Residency, the Milton Avery Fine Arts Award, the Astraea Visual Arts Grant, and the Post MFA Fellowship at The Ohio State University. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, The University of Illinois at Chicago, and Yale University.

ANNA TELCS

Anna Telcs is a textile sculptor who creates hand sewn textile collections for both public performances and display. She trained in both industrial design (University of Washington) and in humanities (Seattle University). In 2004, Telcs moved from Seattle to New York to work in the fashion industry, where she worked with London Fog, Thom Browne, and Helmut Lang. In February 2012, she completed a residency with Robert Wilson at the Watermill Center. As a current resident of Seattle, Telcs' design work has been featured on both the East and West coasts. Telcs' approach to design work attempts to question the existing perceptions around manufacturing, worth, and beauty, ultimately seeking to go deeper into the armature of the fashion object itself as well as the systems and structures that contextualize and regulate it. This aesthetic can be found in her most recent project *The Dowsing*, which was first conceptualized during her residency at the Watermill Center. *The Dowsing* has since been displayed twice in New York, including a showing at the America Society.

Biographies, continued

TOUMAS LAITINEN

Toumas Laitinen is a Helsinki-based director, performance artist, curator, and writer. For the past 10 years his home base has been Reality Research Center, an experimental performative arts collective committed to questioning the nature of reality. He invents new forms of performance based on the bodily participation of the audience. He has innovated performances in the form of retreats, an esoteric philosophical school, pedagogical systems, secular rituals, guided walks through urban spaces, and a methodology of immortality. Laitinen has worked widely as a director and curator in the field of contemporary theatre and performance art in Finland and has been active in creating organizational foundations for the unorganized field of performance in Finland.

DEVIN CAMERON

Designer Devin Cameron is based in New York City where he creates for theatre, events, architecture, print, and web. Recent credits include *Gloria* (New York Philharmonic), *Ghost Opera* (Ear Heart Music), *Nutcracker Rouge* (Company XIV), and Robbie McCauley's *Sugar*—national tour (ArtsEmerson). Devin earned a bachelor's of fine arts in theatre design and technology from Emerson College in Boston.

MAPP INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTIONS

MAPP International Productions is a nonprofit performing arts producing organization that develops sustainable environments for artists to create, premiere, and perform contemporary performing arts projects, and to use arts, humanities, and dialogue to advance appreciation of diverse cultures and perspectives. MAPP's curatorial vision leads it to seek out artists on the cutting edge of their disciplines—artists who lead the way in tackling complex subject matter and experimenting with form, and whose works are the engine that continually pushes the cultural conversation forward in our society. MAPP realizes its mission through three interconnected programs—New Works, Artist-Public Dialogues, and MAPP on Tour—and through its national and international programs, the Community Engagement and Public Humanities initiatives, and The Africa Contemporary Arts Consortium. Since its founding in 1994, MAPP has produced 47 acclaimed multidisciplinary performing arts projects created and performed by more than 400 artists, and produced over 70 national tours, bringing these works to audiences in 42 states and 16 countries. MAPP has introduced the U.S. public to artists from 25 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, and the Caribbean. MAPP has raised and managed nearly \$5 million for the realization and distribution of new work.

Engagement Activities

Thursday, October 9, 2014, 11 AM-12:15 PM

The Music and Technology of *Cipher*

with Eric Lyon's electronic music students

Cube

A moderated conversation with Samita Sinha about the musical foundations of *Cipher*—its instruments, the relationship between body and machine, and acoustic and electronic sound. The creators of *Cipher* will also introduce the concept of the *Resonating Densities*—how they created a total environment, a “band” of sound, light, space, and materials with each collaborator approaching their material in terms of vibration, frequency, and resonance.

Moderated by Eric Lyon

Saturday, October 11, 2014, 9:30 PM

Post-show Discussion with Creators of *Cipher*

Cube

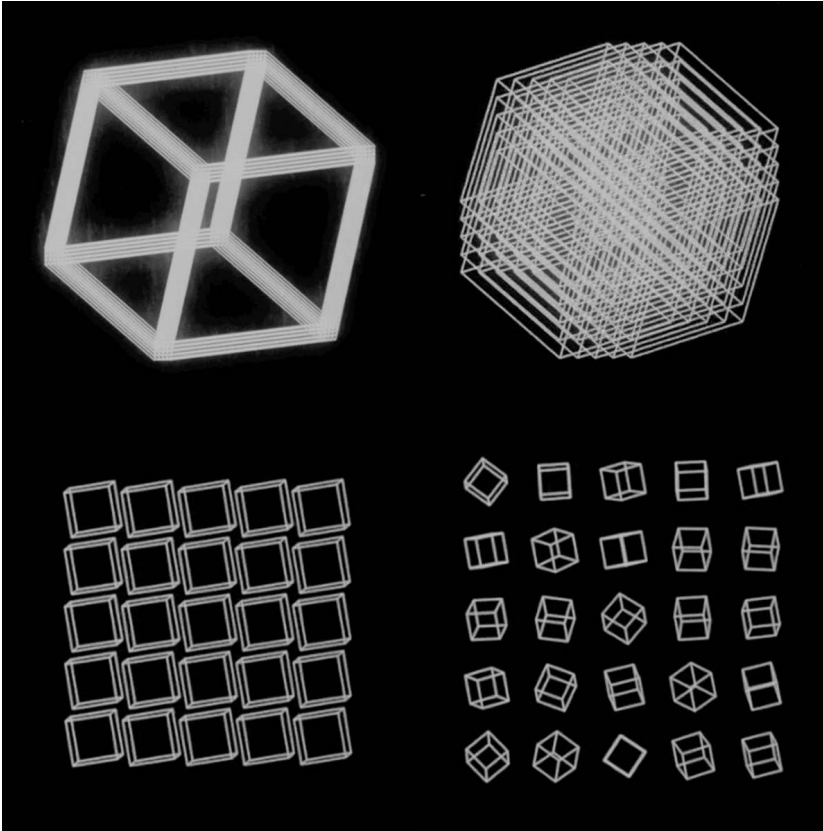
Following the Saturday night performance of Samita Sinha's *Cipher*, audience members are invited to attend a post-show discussion with the creators of *Cipher*: Sinha, Dave Sharma, and Chris Kuhl.

Moderated by Eric Lyon

Free

Special thanks to Eric Lyon

In the Galleries



Manfred Mohr

Stills from *Cube Transformation Study*, 1972

Digitization of original 16mm film

Programmed in FORTRAN IV

Explore CONNECTIONS between works of art, artists, and viewers; between art past and present; and between ideas and their aesthetic manifestation.

Evolving Geometries: Line, Form, and Color

Thursday, September 25, 2014-Thursday, November 20, 2014

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10 AM-6 PM/Saturday-Sunday, 10 AM-4 PM

Three one-person exhibitions by renowned artists Manfred Mohr, Patrick Wilson, and Odili Donald Odita, who inventively explore geometry from multiple perspectives.