

Re:Sound festival — new & experimental music in concert, workshop & installation

by Jarrett Hoffman



Cleveland Uncommon Sound Project will present the 2024 edition of its Re:Sound festival from Friday to Sunday, May 17-19.

Presenting both local and visiting artists who span all different strands of new and experimental music, the

festival takes place at two locations. Convivium 33 Gallery will host a triple-bill concert each day at 7:30 pm, as well as a 2:30 pm workshop on Saturday led by festival headliner Elliott Sharp.

Meanwhile, three sound art installations will be presented on Saturday and Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm at Cleveland Museum of Art's Community Arts Center, located at the Pivot Center for Art, Dance and Expression. Tickets for the festival are available [here](#).

A headlining act is something new for Re:Sound, as Cleveland Uncommon Sound Project (CUSP) managing director Stephan Haluska explained during a recent interview. "He's the only artist we booked ahead of our call for applications."

A multi-instrumentalist and composer, **Elliott Sharp** has been an important part of New York City's avant-garde music scene for decades. His honors include a 2014 Guggenheim Fellowship and a 2015 Berlin Prize, and his recordings range from orchestral music to blues, jazz, noise, no wave rock, and techno.

Sharp will be involved in two of the three parts of Saturday's concert.

"One is a solo set with a work for extended guitar and electronics that I'm very excited for," Haluska said. A long-form composition titled *The Hidden Variable*, it



includes a significant amount of improvisation as well as extended techniques and looping.

“The other is a collaboration with local musicians who will be participating in a workshop ahead of the concert.” Titled *Current Strategies for Sound and Performance*, the workshop will run from 2:30 to 4:30 and is described as “a participatory overview, discussion, and lab in new conceptual approaches to time-based sound art including graphic notation, algorithmic instruction sets, non-musical models, and free improvisation.”

CUSP recently announced a last call for participants in the workshop. Those interested should have some experience improvising and playing in group settings, and will need to provide their own amplification if needed. They should expect an open environment that welcomes questions and demonstrations.

Enrollment is limited to ten people, but the session is open for all to observe. Send an email to uncommonsoundcle@gmail.com if you’re interested in participating.

By hosting workshops — both during the festival and throughout the season — and presenting installations, CUSP aims to have people engage with music in a different way, beyond the concerts themselves. And when those workshops feed into a collaborative performance like this one, all the better. “We’re trying to make that formula more of a mainstay of what we offer across the season,” Haluska said.



Of course, local names also make up an important part of the festival’s lineup, beginning with trumpeter **Theresa May**, who will perform as a duo with New York-based cellist **Sarah Overton** during Friday’s concert. Their set involves electronics — pedals and beats — and the reimagining of classical string works.

“We’ve worked with Theresa in the past, and she’s fantastic,” Haluska said. “She and Sarah Overton have commissioned a number of works, and I think they have a couple of their own works as well.”

Sunday’s program will feature a duo of local musicians. **Ötal** — the moniker of Iceland-born electronic musician Óskar Þór Arngrímsson — will be joined by percussionist **Scott Olson** for a combination of sounds they describe as “a pulsating morphogenesis formed of wood and metal across granular clouds.” Their set will follow the Icelandic concept of *Petta Reddast* (loosely translating to *it will all work*

out in the end). “They’re doing this slow, electronic, ambient sort of set that I’m really excited to hear,” Haluska said.

Two of the three artists responsible for the sound installations are locals. **Andrew Dyet’s** *Vibrating Forms: A Ceramic Chorus* will be presented in the main gallery of the CMA Community Arts Center.

“That’s a really beautiful-looking work that involves a number of ceramic pieces with a kind of hand-built synthesizer and speaker system that will be inside each of them, and it’s all about the totality of these within the space,” Haluska said. As Dyet writes, audience members “can wander through the room hearing how the proximity to different sculptures changes their listening experience.”

And **Ella Medicus’s** *Agreements*, which includes sound design by Ōtal, will be presented in the loading dock room. “It’s a sculptural speaker and video work with sound, and I’m really excited for that,” Haluska said.

As Medicus writes, the piece is about perspective. “If you were light itself, would you be able to see? Seeing only happens when light bounces off an object and into an eye. The light photons make agreements with the objects they will come in contact with, to meet at a point, and create an image for any eyes that might be nearby to witness.”

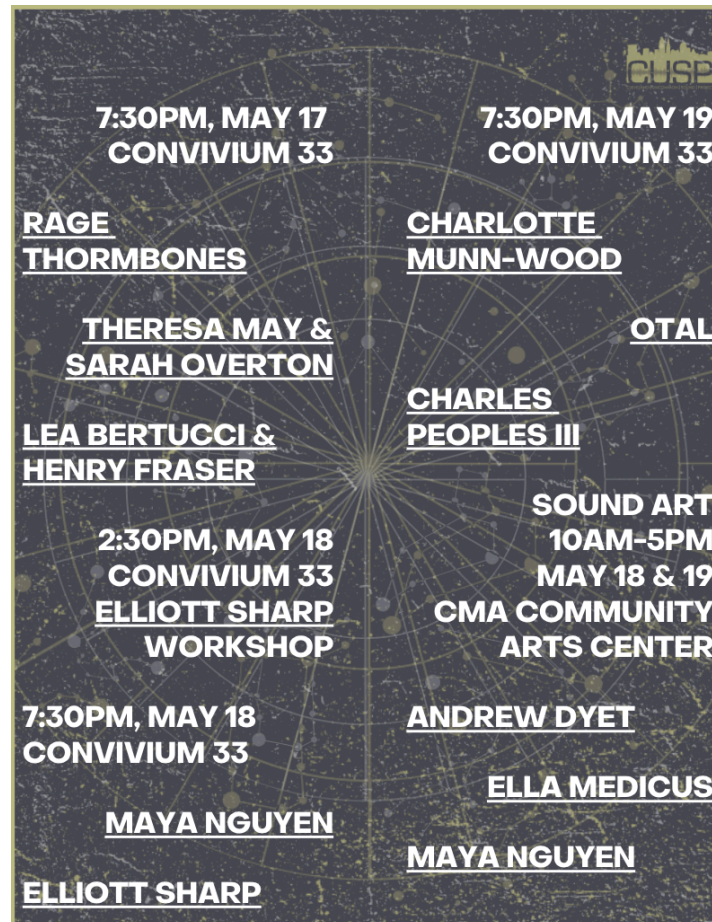
Moving to the visiting artists, we can begin with the duos on Friday’s concert. In addition to the set from May and Overton, **Rage Thormbones** (Mattie Barbier and Weston Olencki) will play a long-form work for brass and electronics titled *things in the dark that ought not exist* that “seeks to recontextualize brass instruments from their gendered perceptions into vibrational entities.” And Lea **Bertucci and Henry Fraser** bring a spectral, improvised set “that meditates on the mystical heaviness of existence” with voice processed through reel-to-reel tape machine, woodwinds, electronics, and double bass.

The work of interdisciplinary artist **Maya Nguyen** — whose compositions bring together speech fragments, urban recordings, body movements, migratory routes, sounds imitating nature sounds, and videos of daily encounters — can be experienced both in concert and in installation. She opens Saturday’s program with *I Hear You Can Make A Helicopter Sound With A Flower*, exploring “political considerations of sound, ideologies of sound design, and diasporic listening.” And in the activity room of CMA’s Community Arts



Center, her installation *Whisper Wind Water* will center around the human experience of — and effects on — nature.

Sunday’s performances begin with violinist **Charlotte Munn-Wood** in *SOUNDNEST*. Co-composed with Aimée Niemann, the work “invites performers and audience to gather sounds from their environment and build them into music.” And **Charles Peoples III** will bring together extended vocal techniques and gesture-controlled technology as part of improvisations “tapping into the mystical and formless,” concluding both the concert and another intriguing year of programming from Re:Sound.



More information about the schedule and the artists can be found [here](#).

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