



Zoë Keating, Cello

FRIDAY, JANUARY 28, 2022

7:30 PM ET PREMIERE

MAHANEY ARTS CENTER VIRTUAL STAGE



Zoë Keating, Cello

Program to be announced during the broadcast



*This performance premieres Friday, January 28, 2022
at 7:30 PM ET,
and remains available on-demand for 48 hours.*

*Our sincerest thanks to Zoë Keating, Alex Nahas, and Mark Lourie
for helping us pivot to this virtual performance format.*

*This performance is made possible with support from
the Paul Nelson Performance Endowment,
established in 2014.*

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Artist Biographies

Zoë Keating, Cello

Composer and performer Zoë Keating has spent the last 20 years exploring the landscape of sounds a string instrument can make. She coaxes sounds out of the very edges of her cello, adeptly layering them into “swoon inducing” (*San Francisco Weekly*) music that is unclassifiable yet “a distinctive mix of old and new” (*National Public Radio*). She is known for her use of technology – which she uses to record and sample her cello onstage and in the studio – and for her DIY approach – composing, recording, and producing her works on her own terms, without the help of a record label.



Born in Canada to British and American parents, Keating started playing the cello when she was eight and went on to pursue electronic music and contemporary composition as part of her Liberal Arts studies at Sarah Lawrence College. After graduation she moved to San Francisco and built a career as an information architect and data analyst while moonlighting as a cellist in rock bands. Keating eventually combined her love of music and technology, using a computer to live-layer her cello and performing for late-night parties in the San Francisco warehouse in which she lived.

Keating’s recorded works have achieved a surprising degree of popular ubiquity for a DIY artist. Her self-produced albums have several times reached #1 on the iTunes classical charts and spent many months on the Billboard classical charts. Her recordings are used as bumper music for NPR’s Morning Edition, as the theme music to OnBeing, as the thinking- music of the Sherlock Holmes character on CBS Elementary, in countless documentaries, and in tens of thousands of online videos of everything from professional and amateur dance performances to rock climbing and gaming videos.

Keating also composes for TV, theater, film, and dance. She co-composed, along with Jeff Russo, the score for the HBO movie “Oslo”, which earned them an Emmy Nomination in 2021 for Outstanding Music for a Television Movie. In addition to her recordings, Keating performs to rapt audiences around the world. Each performance is

unique as she spontaneously improvises around her works, demonstrates how she makes them, and tells the stories behind each piece.

A vocal advocate for the rights of artists and creators, Keating writes and speaks often about copyright and the mechanics of the music industry economy. She was elected a governor of the San Francisco chapter of the Recording Academy, named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum, and served as a boardmember of CASH Music, a nonprofit organization that built open source digital tools for musicians and labels.

As a cellist, Keating has played with a wide range of artists, including Imogen Heap, Amanda Palmer, Guy Sigsworth, Tears for Fears, DJ Shadow, Dan Hicks, Thomas Dolby, Sean Ono Lennon, John Vanderslice, Rasputina, Pomplamoose, and Paolo Nutini.

Keating's husband Jeffrey Rusch, who founded the arts warehouse where they lived and where she started her music career, was diagnosed with stage IV cancer in 2014. While she halted her music career to care for him and their then four-year old son, their struggles with health care and insurance became a new subject of her blog. Following Rusch's death in 2015, Keating continued to advocate for patients, data portability, and the simplification of medical insurance, culminating in a meeting with President Obama in October of 2016.

Zoë Keating lives in Burlington, Vermont and is working on a new album.

"...a distinctive mix of old and new -- layers of sound, that feel more like orchestrations than a solo instrument." —*National Public Radio*

"Swoon-inducing. Like taking a triple-shot of Absinthe before stepping outside of the bar just in time to see the sun exploding." —*SF Weekly*

"... uses live looping to transform solo performances into multipart masterpieces." — *Electronic Musician*

"...sublime minimalist music with a pop sensibility" — *San Francisco Weekly*

Awards:

- Creative Capital Foundation, 2009. Performing Arts grant
- San Francisco Artsfest, 2005. Emerging artist award
- Belle Foundation, 2005. Artistic development grant
- World Economic Forum, 2011. Young Global Leader

Alex Nahas, Sound Engineer

Good music for Alex Nahas is first and foremost a gut reaction. It is as much a response to mood and texture as to melody, rhythm, and arrangement. Nahas is as passionate about sound production as he is about coming up with the perfect melody hook – which is why he’s had his feet on stage and in the studio, on both sides of the mixing desk.



Nahas cut his teeth as a producer and audio engineer some 20-odd years ago when he ran an ad in the back of a local San Francisco music magazine for mobile multitrack recording. The response was strong and Nahas developed a niche for bringing high-end production sensibilities to live recording. As that continued to grow, he co-founded and built Division Hi Fi, a state-of-the-art analog recording studio in the heart of San Francisco. His many collaborations with the 90s independent music underground in at the time included Mates of State, John Vanderslice, and Jill Tracy, as well as his own project, Laughingstock. Nahas continued to work simultaneously as a live and recording engineer as well as a songwriter and touring musician through his move to Brooklyn, New York in 2007. There he formed Bright Brown Sound, his music production moniker named after his current band, Bright Brown.

Nahas named his production style “sonic cinema.” He believes that whether it’s organic or synthetic, commercial or cerebral, music should immerse you the way a good movie theater experience would. It should come at you a little but mostly pull you in. Nahas has worked on all kinds of recording systems over the years and learned that technique, attention to craft, and sensibility are far more important in achieving his sound than the gear he works on. It’s knowing how to exploit the limitations of the gear that makes good records. Nahas prefers the simple big knobs and faders of the analog world but is happy to work in the box as well to create “sonic cinema.”





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We give thanks for the opportunity to share in the bounty of this place and to protect it.