



**CARLA KIHLESTEDT**

***NECESSARY MONSTERS***

Friday and Saturday,  
February 29 and March 1, 2008

Museum of  
Contemporary  
Art

# CARLA KIHSTEDT

## ***Necessary Monsters***

Carla Kihlstedt, *concept, artistic direction,  
and composer\**

Paul Bargetto, *theatrical director*

Rafael Oses, *lyrics and libretto*

Allen Willner, *lighting design*

Amanda Bujak, *costume design*

Mimi Lien, *set design*

Performed by

Matthias Bossi (*The Lamed Wufnik*), *drums, percussion,  
and piano*

Chris Fisher-Lochhead (*The Nisna*), *viola and piano*

Carla Kihlstedt (*The Writer*), *violin, voice, bass  
harmonica, percussion, and piano*

Michael Mellender (*The Ink Monkey*), *bass, guitar,  
percussion, trumpet, and piano*

Freddi Price (*The One-Eyed Being*), *trumpet, voice,  
national steel guitar, euphonium, bones, and piano*

Nina Rolle (*The Double*), *accordion, voice, glockenspiel,  
and piano*

Theresa Wong (*The Squonk*), *cello, voice, and piano*

Mark Orton, *sound engineer, arrangement on The  
Lamed Wufniks, and overall arrangement counsel*

Jenny Raymond, *production manager*

Minna Choi, *production assistant*

cumbersome multiples, *images, design, and letterpress*

\**The Ink Monkey* was written collaboratively by  
Matthias Bossi, Shahzad Ismaili, and Carla Kihlstedt.  
All musical arrangements were pushed and pulled  
at by the assembled Monsters until they fit just right.

*Necessary Monsters* is co-commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art in partnership with Alverno Presents and the National Performance Network Creation Fund. The NPN Creation Fund is sponsored by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, Nathan Cummings Foundation, Altria, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). For more information, visit [www.npnweb.org](http://www.npnweb.org).



Backstage hospitality provided by Whole Foods Market



This production of *Necessary Monsters* was coproduced with East River Ensemble, a 501c3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to producing the work of East River Commedia, a group of international theater artists who collaborate on the production and development of ensemble-based theatrical works in the US and abroad. For more information, visit [www.eastriver.org](http://www.eastriver.org).

All photos by Piotr Redlinski

*We do not know what the dragon means, just as we do not know the meaning of the universe, but there is something in the image of the dragon that is congenial to man's imagination, and thus the dragon arises in many latitudes and ages. It is, one might say, a necessary monster, not some ephemeral and casual creature.*

—Jorge Luis Borges, January 29, 1954

### *Necessary Monsters*

#### The Bestiary

1. An Animal Dreamed by C. S. Lewis  
{*'Being that sings unsung.'*}
2. Hochigan  
{*'Being that would rather leave us speechless.'*}
3. The Squonk  
{*'Being that cries at the drop of a tear.'*}
4. The Nisna  
{*'Being that as half is whole.'*}
5. The Double  
{*'Being that is that being.'*}
6. The Ink Monkey  
{*'Being that indicts writing, resents text. Encaustic.'*}
7. One-Eyed Being  
{*'Being that is what it ate.'*}
8. The Lamed Wufniks  
{*'Being that carries on. A yeoman no one.'*}
9. Odradek  
{*'Being that was, is & will be.'*}

Please consult the *Field Guide* to learn more about the bestiary.

To increase appreciation of *Necessary Monsters*, the MCA presents this intimate opportunity for audience members to engage with the artists.

### **First Night**

#### **Friday, February 29**

Stay for an insightful postshow talk led by Peter Taub, Director of Performance Programs, with Carla Kihlstedt and fellow collaborators.

## FROM THE COMPOSER



I am a collaborative beast by nature. I enjoy the solitude of writing, but I live for the messy process of rehearsing—of fusing the head of one idea with the tail of another. Ensembles that function collaboratively are animals in the wild, not behind bars or captives in a zoo. They function on instinct, experience, and cooperation. I am thrilled to have been able to corral so many of my favorite artists to join in this project and so grateful for the enthusiasm and commitment that they've all brought to *Necessary Monsters*.

This is really a cross-section of many overlapping facets of my life and music. For me, the divisions between genres of music have become irrelevant. There are no easy walls we can build that define aesthetically where we come from, what we're exposed to, or what we enjoy. Our capacity for expression is often larger than we want to admit. Writing this music was like building a home for each being, and each one needed a different kind of space.

In some ways, this project is about imagination, which is, of course, a small window into what lies beneath the surface of our lives. It's about uncovering and digging, more than it is about deciding and fashioning. Jorge Luis Borges's *Book of Imaginary Beings* has been a touchstone of mine for years. It is a portrait of the human imagination and experience. The creatures in it are reflections of our own ideas, thoughts, hopes, and demons. It has been illuminating to open up the pages and let them run around our collective head as that is, after all, where they come from in the first place.

—Carla Kihlstedt



## **Paul Bargetto**

is the founder and artistic director of East River Commedia. He holds a master of fine arts degree from Columbia University in directing and a bachelor of arts degree in drama from San Francisco State University. He grew up in the Santa Cruz Mountains in California and lives in Brooklyn. Recent credits include *The Magnificent Cuckold* at the Connelly Theater in New York; *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Serenada i Vulpe Filosof* at the National Theater of Constanta in Romania; *The Jamal Lullabies*, *Serenade*, and *Philosopher Fox* at Collective: Unconscious in New York; *Philosopher Fox* at the Malta International Festival; *Striptease* and *Out at Sea* at La MaMa ETC in New York; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Riverside Church in New York; and *Hecuba* in Assos, Turkey. He was a semifinalist in the Wagner Forum–organized Ring Award competition in Graz, Austria, and winner of the Best Director and Best Production

of a Play awards at the 2005 New York Innovative Theater Awards. He is also a founding member of the League of Independent Theater, a group of activist theater makers in New York dedicated to improving and promoting off-off Broadway productions. Last summer, he curated the Undergroundzero Festival at Collective: Unconscious, a new festival celebrating cutting-edge downtown theater. As an actor, he recently appeared in the award-winning play *Charlie Victor Romeo* in a touring production at the American Repertory Theatre in Boston and Studio Theater in Washington, D.C.

## **Matthias Bossi**

is a drummer and orator for the group Sleepytime Gorilla Museum. He has toured and recorded with the Grammy-nominated band Skeleton Key and is a founding member of The Book of Knots, a studio collective that has had the pleasure of collaborating with

such musical luminaries as Tom Waits, Mike Watt, David Thomas, and Jon Langford. This spring, Bossi will embark on a series of musical adventures with Cosa Brava, a quartet spearheaded by Fred Frith that also features Zeena Parkins and Carla Kihlstedt.

### **Amanda Bujak**

holds a master of fine arts degree in design from New York University. She designs for film, television, and theater. Some of her recent theater credits include *The Magnificent Cuckold* directed by Paul Bargetto (East River Commedia), Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (iTheatrics), *A Quick Nut Bread to Make Your Mouth Water* (Peculiar Works Project), *Women of Trachis* directed by Alice Reagan, *Father Joy* directed by Pam Mackinnon, *Krapp's Last Tape* directed by Will MacAdams, *The Uneventful Deaths of Agathon and Don Juan* directed by Javier Gonzales, *The Cripple of Inishmann* directed by Victor Pappas, *The Fifth of July* directed by Julia Gibson, *The Washing Machine* directed by Michael Chamberlin, and *Cantus Articus* choreographed by Karole Armitage. Bujak is also the resident costume designer for East River Commedia. She currently lives in the Williamsburg neighborhood in Brooklyn.

### **Minna Choi**

is a pianist and composer currently working toward a master's degree in composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in the studio of Elinor Armer. Aside from school, she sings in the band illuminea on High Two Recordings, plays keys in the hip-hop collective Dymond Stamp Productions, and freelances as a personal assistant to Carla Kihlstedt. In her free time, she enjoys composing film scores for her production company pink.beats.

### **Chris Fisher-Lochhead**

grew up in a musical family in New York. He studied violin from an early age and began composing at the age of ten. He holds a bachelor of music degree from the University of Michigan, where he studied composition with William Bolcom and viola with Yizhak Schotten. His recent projects as a composer and performer have straddled many styles and media, combining elements of classical music, jazz, blues, hip-hop, and country music to name a few.

### **Carla Kihlstedt**

grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and makes her home in the Bay Area. She got her start headed squarely down the path of classical music, but early on, began to slowly veer, lurch, and wind, making a life of musical bushwhacking. She cofounded Tin Hat (purveyors of subtle melody and filmatically evocative texture) with two other East Coast ex-pats (the group still includes Mark Orton, and now includes Ben Goldberg, Ara Anderson, and Zeena Parkins). She sings (which she recommends to everyone simply for one's well-being) in the wildly divergent groups 2 Foot Yard (whose self-released second CD *Borrowed Arms* comes out March 4) and the challenging, confounding, and compelling Sleepytime Gorilla Museum.

Outside of her various identities in these bands, Kihlstedt has worked as a composer both in collaboration and alone. She has written and recorded two full-length scores to accompany the dance performances of Jo Kreiter and Flyaway Productions, the first, *Flying Low*, written with Shahzad Ismaili, and the latest, *Ravish* (with Matthias Bossi), funded by a grant from Meet The Composer. In the classical realm, she recently performed as a soloist with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players premiering Jorge Liderman's *Furthermore* . . . and, later in March, will perform with the Boston Modern

Orchestra Project and violinist Colin Jacobsen premiering Lisa Bielawa's new double violin concerto. Kihlstedt feels very lucky to have been able to work with many of her musical heroes including Tom Waits, Satoko Fujii, Ben Goldberg, Carla Bozulich, and Fred Frith, whose new band Cosa Brava (including Zeena Parkins and Matthias Bossi) will tour Europe in April.

She was an artist in residence in 2002 at the Headlands Center for the Arts in California and at the Civitella Ranieri Institute in Umbria, Italy, in 2006. Recently, with the Rova Saxophone Quartet, Kihlstedt received a grant from the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation for the creation and performance of a new work. Last November, she was the guest curator of the Music Unlimited Festival in Wels, Austria, at which she was humbled by endless bouts of inspiring music. She couldn't possibly be more excited to work and play with the group of Monsters assembled here tonight.

### **Mimi Lien**

is a New York-based designer of sets and environments for theater, dance, opera, and film. Having arrived at set design from a background in architecture, her work often investigates the interaction between audience/environment and object/performer. Her work has been presented in New York at the Signature Theatre, Ohio Theater, The Joyce, Dance Theater Workshop, The Flea, Juilliard, Symphony Space, and The Kitchen, among others; and regionally at the Shakespeare Theater of New Jersey, the Chautauqua Institute in Massachusetts, and the Wilma Theater, the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and the Pennsylvania Ballet in Philadelphia. Collaborators include Eliot Feld, Blanka Zizka, Tina Landau, Charles Moulton, Davis McCallum, Pig Iron Theatre Company, East River Commedia, and The Actors Company Theatre. She is a recipient of the

2005 Barrymore Award for *Outrage*, directed by Jiri Zizka for the Wilma Theater, and a semifinalist in the Ring Award competition in Graz, Austria, for opera design.

In January 2007, she was selected as *Live Design* magazine's Young Designer to Watch and is a current recipient of the National Endowment of the Arts/Theater Communications Group Career Development Program (2007–09). She studied design at New York University and architecture at Yale University.

### **Michael Mellender**

was born in a small hole and raised by a pack of skraelings. He discovered music at age five and flourished in a world that somewhat approached actualness. He likes long walks on the beach, spicy mustard, and cuddling the ghost of your childhood pet. With fellow Monsters Carla Kihlstedt and Matthias Bossi, Mellender is the percussionist/everythingist of the group Sleepytime Gorilla Museum and the cofounder of the Immersion Composition Society. At the time of this writing, he cannot play the violin.

### **Mark Orton**

is a composer and producer based in Portland, Oregon, best known as the guitarist in Tin Hat and for his work scoring for film, including *Sweet Land* (dir.: Ali Selim, 2005), *The Good Girl* (dir.: Miguel Arteta, 2002), and *Everything Is Illuminated* (dir.: Liev Schreiber, 2005). He was sound engineer and, more recently, house engineer at The Knitting Factory in New York. Orton has worked with artists such as John Zorn, Kronos Quartet, Sonic Youth, and Laurie Anderson. Ever the adventurer, he has survived countless flights over several continents as a touring engineer with Bill Frisell, Mr. Bungle, and John Lurie and the Lounge Lizards to name a few.



### Rafael Oses

holds degrees from Hartford Art School and Columbia University. His work appeared in *Black Warrior Review* in 1998, for which he received the publication's 1998–99 Literary Award for Poetry, and was also nominated for a Pushcart Prize. He received an artist grant from the Connecticut Commission on the Arts in 1999 and a MacDowell Colony fellowship in 2002. Oses was a finalist for the Philbrick Award in 2004 and the inaugural recipient of the Alonzo Davis Fellowship from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts in 2007. His poems have also been published in *Fugue*, *The Cincinnati Review*, and *Endicott Review*.

His radio play *Violet Enlightens* was broadcast on Pacifica Radio affiliates KGNU, Boulder; KPFA, Berkeley; and KNMU in Albuquerque as well as on Bush Radio in Cape Town, South Africa; Resonance 104.4 FM in London; and WDR in Germany, and is archived in the Electronic Poetry Center at State University of New York at Buffalo. His poem *Balada*, scored for soprano and guitar by composer Thomas Schuttenhelm, premiered at the Centro Cultural Conde Duque in Madrid in 2007. Oses has been a core faculty member in creative writing at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts since 1997 and has also taught courses at the University of Hartford and Saint Joseph College. He received a Surdna Arts Teacher Fellowship in 2007.

### Freddi Price

is a performer living in the San Francisco Bay Area whose multi-instrumental musical talents have gotten him into more trouble than he is worth. After his humble beginnings in the theater, he led a life (and several near-deaths) of travel, then retreated to the Bay Area where the local music scene embraced his efforts at musical ambiguation through which he graced the streets and stages of the United States

and Europe as a founder and central pillar of the band Rube Waddell, San Francisco's Bad News Bears of rock. He has had his hands in many ensembles, including brass bands, cabaret, theater, sketch comedy, puppet theater, soul bands, lounge acts, and film. His instrumentalist pretensions have landed him recording gigs with a few of the Bay Area's bright stars including Jolie Holland, Eric McFadden, Mark Crowden, and others. He has had his music, compositions, and voice featured in various film projects and is a well-loved solo performer in the Bay Area. Most recently, he built a bicycle-powered stagecoach mobile theater on which he performed his music and theater works with a ragged band of puppets. An inveterate orthoepist, he is honored to pronounce words inspired by one of the finest and most imaginative writers who has ever lived and to perform notes composed by the most noteworthy musicians and composers among us still.

### **Jenny Raymond**

is a classical oboist who completed her studies at The Juilliard School, Columbia, Yale, and Carnegie Mellon Universities. Residing in the Harlem neighborhood in Manhattan, she freelances, teaches at the Preparatory Division of Manhattan School of Music, is the grants manager for The Harnisch Family Foundation, and is an interviewer for the Oral History, American Music Project at Yale University. She is married to interactive designer Jake Barton and mom to interactive toddler Dexter.

### **Nina Rolle**

is a hybrid artist (singer, composer, dharma artist, writer, actor, and clown) and pioneer in the sonic theater genre. Her original show *Zen Cabaret: a contemplative burlesque* was named Best of Denver 2007 and Pick of the Fringe at the Boulder International Fringe Festival in 2005 and 2006. She has collabo-

rated with Amy Denio, UMO Ensemble, Sound Circle, Curious Theatre Branch, Shinichi Koga, Giant Ant Farm, and Moshe Cohen's Clown Conspiracy, and has performed her original scores for Los Angeles's Zoo District, the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art's production of Suzan-Lori Parks's *Venus*, and Tiger-Lion Works' outdoor pageant-play *The Buddha Prince* in Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and New York. For six years Rolle recorded and toured nationally as singer and accordionist with the Bay Area band Charming Hostess. She is a graduate of Naropa University, where she trained with Barbara Dille, Meredith Monk, and Allen Ginsberg, and is currently adjunct faculty in the music department. She has been a student of Tibetan Buddhism since 1989 and teaches meditation and contemplative arts. She studied Butoh in Japan with its originator, Kazuo Ohno, and trained intensively in physical theater forms with Ruth Zaporah and Anne Bogart's SITI company.

### **Allen Willner**

has designed lights, sound, and sets for many artists from New York and San Francisco, including Richard Schechner's East Coast Artists, The Erika Shuch Performance Project, Motion Lab, Kenn Watt's 5th Floor, Shinichi Iova Koga and inkBoat, East River Commedia, Nanos Operetta, Tanya Calamoneri & Company, So.Go.No., Janis Ian, Scott Wells and Dancers, Megan Nicely, Linda Carr, The Secret Chiefs 3, Cassie Terman, Faun Fables, FeatherLead, Ed Purver and Sara Kraft, Angus Balbernie, Krista DeNio, Sleepytime Gorilla Museum, Paige Sorvillo, Leigh Evans, Lunatique Fantastique, ROVA Saxophone Quartet, and Carla Kihlstedt. In 2004, Willner's direction and design of inkBoat's *Heaven's Radio* received four Isadora Duncan Dance Award nominations and won the award for lighting and stage design. He also received a Dean Goodman Choice Award for Lighting Design for his work on Ingabor Weinman's *Don't Look, Don't Ask*.

## Theresa Wong

is an improviser and composer based in Oakland, California. Her current work spans the areas of improvisation, composition, video, and performance art. In 2005, she presented a solo show of improvisations on cello and amplified bicycle as well as a video work at the Fondation Cartier in Paris as part of the *J'en rêve* exhibition. Her performances have been included in the Other Minds Brink series in San Francisco, Radio France, Oregon Festival of American Music, and the Seattle Improvised Music Festival. She recently wrote, directed, and performed the improvised opera *L()VE*, which she presented at Mills College in Oakland, California. She has collaborated and performed with artists such as Tatsuya Nakatani, Devin Hoff, Joelle Leandre, Meredith Monk, June Watanabe, ROVA Saxophone Quartet, and Florentine Dance Company Secondo Taglio. She is a cofounder of Womantis, an Oakland-based collective for women in the arts, and a member of Bolivar Zoar, a rock trio with Ava Mendoza and MaryClare Bryztwa. Wong completed a master of fine arts degree in performance at Mills College, where she studied composition with Fred Frith and Annie Gosfield and cello with Joan Jeanrenaud.

*The composer would like to thank those who have been involved in countless ways behind the scenes:*

### **Piotr Redlinski, documentary and portrait photographer**

Redlinski has consistently lent his eye, expertise, and thoughtful opinions to this process. He has taken, and continues to take, photographs documenting the creation of *Necessary Monsters*. [www.redlinski.net](http://www.redlinski.net).

### **Sue Renee Bernstein and Bernstein Artists, booking agent and artist manager**

Bernstein has been an advisor and friend for many years. I can't imagine where I would be without her. [www.bernsarts.com](http://www.bernsarts.com)

### **cumbersome multiples**

A print and design collective led by husband and wife artist team Daniel Duford and Tracy Schlapp, cumbersome multiples collaborates with artists and writers to create printed matter using letterpress, block printing, and collage. [www.danielduford.com](http://www.danielduford.com).

*Necessary Monsters could not have happened without the unbridled generosity of the following people:*

Gil Bellows & Rya Kihlstedt  
 Fred & Heike Bloom  
 Arnold & Maggie Bossi  
 James W. Bunting  
 Beverly & Paul Gardner, Jr.  
 Rusty Gill  
 Carole Gravagno, Phoebe W. Haas Charitable Trust  
 Ruth Ann Harnisch, The Harnisch Family Foundation  
 Zona & Jim Hostetler  
 The Randy Hostetler Living Room Fund  
 Carol Hickey & Lou Spanier  
 Ellen L. Brody Hughes  
 Andrea & Tyko Kihlstedt  
 Marsha & Paul Meunier  
 Janice McGuire & Charles Niessner  
 Margaret S. Moss  
 Catherine & Bart Rocca, The Catherine & Bart Rocca Charitable Gift Fund  
 Mark S. Rothbaum & Mia Tangredi Rothbaum  
 Solomon & Barbara Wank, National Philanthropic Trust  
 Rosalyn R. Ward  
 Andrew & Ann Weickert  
 Bonnie B. Wright  
 Rya Zobel & James Finke

Thank you so much to Jenny, Jake & Dexter; to Mark, Megan & Max; to Marika Hughes, Shahzad Ismaili, Jessica Troy, Ara Anderson, and Daveen DiGiacomo for their ideas, time, and energy; to Paul Dresher; to Nieves & Dan Rathbun; to Kate Rannels; to Otto Cosmopolis; and to Tom Crawford, David Ravel, and Peter Taub for their faith and support.