

Adams @ 70 comes to VPAC

**VPAC Celebrates Composer John Adams with
AMERICAN BESERK, String Quartet 1, Punk Rock/Player Piano, Hallelujah Junction, Shaker Loops, Grand Pianola, John's Book of Alleged Dances
and more!**

Jacaranda's Patrick Scott curates *AMERICAN BESERK*, Christopher Rountree conducts *wild Up for Adams/Punk Rock/Player Piano*, and the St. Lawrence String Quartet perform Adams in a special on-stage recital in February to honor the landmark anniversary.

American Berserk

A Celebration of John Adams; curated by Patrick Scott; Mark Allan Hilt, Conductor
Saturday, January 14 at 8:00pm

St. Lawrence String Quartet

Adams Quintet No 1

Beethoven's String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132

Friday, February 3 at 8:00pm

wild Up, Adams/Punk Rock/Player Piano

Christopher Rountree, Conductor

Featuring *Hallelujah Junction & Shaker Loops*

Thursdays, February 16 at 8:00pm

(Los Angeles, CA) December 30, 2016 - Valley Performing Arts Center joins in the year-long global tribute to celebrate the 70th birthday of prolific American composer, John Adams, with three distinct programs to honor the legendary California composer: *American Berserk*, a celebration of John Adams curated by Patrick Scott on January 14, St. Lawrence String Quartet on February 3 and *wild Up, Adams/Punk Rock/Player Piano* on February 16.

To complement Adams symphonic and operatic work being performed elsewhere in Los Angeles, VPAC's programming puts the focus directly on the composer illuminating his earlier chamber music which differs greatly from those larger works. These three evenings pairs Adams with a century of American music from rag to punk. Also, the piano is the center piece in all three programs including two that feature Gloria Cheng who first performed *Hallelujah Junction* in 1998.

“John Adams is an American legend,” says Thor Steingraber, VPAC’s Executive Director. “No other contemporary composer has shaped American music aesthetics more than John Adams. For our Age of Adams series, we have crafted three nuanced and distinctly different performances, two of which will be presented onstage alongside our audience providing an intimate encounter with Adams’ music.” Steingraber pointed out that “VPAC’s ongoing commitment to LA artists was the impetus for this series of concerts. The Age of Adams marks VPAC’s second performance with Chris Rountree, and this will be our first collaboration with Patrick Scott. I’m honored to showcase both artists this season at VPAC.”

American Berserk

Kicking off a month-long celebration of composer John Adams, Jacaranda chamber music series comes to VPAC from its home in Santa Monica. Jacaranda traces Adam’s pianistic roots from Creole music, Ragtime, and Jazz – which all come together in the Adams piano solo *American Berserk*. Curated by Patrick Scott, the evening will also include music and movement created by 6 dancers from UCLA’s resident company, Citi as well as Los Angeles company, DIAVOLO – Architecture in Motion. The evening’s concert will be presented in two acts that feature both music and dance and include musicians Gloria Cheng and Van Cliburn medalist, Christopher Taylor.

Patrick Scott, Artistic and Executive Director of Jacaranda, as well as curator for *American Berserk* said, “*American Berserk* traces an alternative set of musical roots for the ultimate American composer John Adams – as we celebrate his 70th birthday. Explore piano music starting in the 19th century by maverick American Creole and African American composers, and an innovator from Texarkana living in Mexico. Witty salon music, Ragtime dances, and Jazz classics lead to the piano fantasy by Adams that gives the concert its name — American Berserk. Then on to astonishing music for amplified string quartet with dancers, and *Grand Pianola Music* a tremendous finale with two pianos, double winds, double brass, triple percussion and three singers.”

St. Lawrence String Quartet

On February 3, St. Lawrence String Quartet will perform the quartet that Adams composed specifically for them, paired with the Beethoven quartet that inspired it. *The Washington Post* says, “If good relationships are built on trust, the bond between St. Lawrence String Quartet and composer John Adams is a marriage made in chamber-music heaven.”

wild Up; Adams / Punk Rock / Player Piano

On February 16, *wild Up*, the experimental classical ensemble, will perform *Adams/Punk Rock/Player Piano*, exploring the social activism link between John Adams and punk rock. Christopher Rountree, artistic director conductor, explains, “Growing up, John Adams always felt like an establishment musician to me – the ultimate insider. However, he fought to be an outsider, a provocateur, changing the way we create and perform music. This program will trace Adams’ desire for social activism, through music, side-by-side with the history of punk rock. Not only are both styles of music rhythmically similar, they contain deep undercurrents of political angst.”

About John Adams

Composer, conductor, and creative thinker - John Adams occupies a unique position in the world of music. His works stand out among contemporary classical compositions for their depth of expression, brilliance of sound, and the profoundly humanist nature of their themes. Works spanning more than three decades are among the most performed of all contemporary classical music, among them *Harmonielehre*, *Shaker Loops*, *El Niño*, the *Chamber Symphony* and *The Dharma at Big Sur*. His stage works, all in collaboration with director Peter Sellars, have transformed the genre of contemporary music theater. Of Adams’ best-known opera, the *New Yorker* magazine wrote “Not since ‘*Porgy and Bess*’ has an American opera won such universal acclaim as ‘*Nixon in China*’.” Nonesuch Records has recorded all of Adams’ music over the past three decades. The latest release is *Scheherazade.2*, Adams’ latest work, a dramatic symphony for violin and orchestra written for Leila Josefowicz. As conductor, Adams leads the world’s major orchestras in repertoire that from Beethoven and Mozart to Stravinsky, Ives, Carter, Zappa, Glass and Ellington. Conducting engagements in recent and coming seasons include the Concertgebouw Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Wiener Symphoniker and BBC Symphony, as well as the orchestras in Houston, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Seattle,

Baltimore and Madrid. In 2017 Adams celebrates his seventieth birthday with festivals of his music in Europe and the US, including special retrospectives at London's Barbican, at Cité de la Musique in Paris, and in Amsterdam, New York, Geneva, Stockholm, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Born and raised in New England, Adams learned the clarinet from his father and played in marching bands and community orchestras during his formative years. He began composing at age ten and his first orchestral pieces were performed while just a teenager. Adams has received honorary doctorates from Yale, Harvard, Northwestern, Cambridge and The Juilliard School. A provocative writer, he is author of the highly-acclaimed autobiography 'Hallelujah Junction' and is a frequent contributor to the New York Times Book Review. Adams is Creative Chair of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. His new opera, *Girls of the Golden West*, an opera about the California Gold Rush, will premiere in November of 2017 in San Francisco. The official John Adams website is www.earbox.com.

About wild Up

wild Up has been called "Searing. Penetrating. And thrilling" by Fred Child of *Performance Today* and "Magnificent" by Mark Swed of the *Los Angeles Times*. Over the last five years, *wild Up* has collaborated with orchestras, rock bands and cultural institutions around the world.

The group began in 2010 as a self-funded, completely bootstrapped project of *wild Up's* Artistic Director and Conductor Christopher Rountree: after graduate school, Rountree returned to Los Angeles wanting to create an ensemble made up of young musicians, a group that would reject classical music's most outdated traditions and embrace unusual venues and programs that throw the classical repertoire into the context of pop culture, new music and performance art. The group's first few concerts at art studios and rock clubs around L.A. created a fervent fan-base of true believers. Then UCLA's Hammer Museum tapped *wild Up* as the museum's first ever Ensemble in Residence, and after dozens of concerts in the Hammer's halls, courtyards and galleries, the L.A. Times proclaimed the group "Best Classical Music of 2012." It was off to the races, as *wild Up* began working with musical and cultural institutions around the world.

The group has been Ensemble in Residence with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and played numerous programs with the Los Angeles Philharmonic including the Phil's Brooklyn Festival, Minimalist Jukebox Festival, and Next on Grand Festival. They started an ongoing education partnership with the Colburn School, taught Creativity and Consciousness at Bard's Longy School, led composition classes with the American Composers Forum and American Composers Orchestra, and founded and an intensive educational program with the LA Philharmonic in which ten young composers and a faculty of eight legendary composers meet to collaborate on new work.

While the group is part of the fabric of classical music in L.A., *wild Up* also embraces indie music collaborations. The group has an album forthcoming on Bedroom Community Records with Bjork's choir *Graduale Nobili*, vocalist Jodie Landau, and producer Valgeir Sigurðsson recorded in Reykjavik, Iceland; they played with composer Ellis Ludwig-Leone and rock band San Fermin under a tyrannosaurus rex at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles; they performed Mica Levi of *Micachu* and the Shapes' score of the Scarlett Johansson film "Under the Skin" at the Regent Theater in downtown L.A.; they premiered and recorded an opera by Lewis Pesacov of afrobeat band Fool's Gold about the end of the Mayan Calendar; and they will premiere forthcoming works by Domino Records artist Julia Holter and Eric Avery of rock band Jane's Addiction.

In the current season, *wild Up* was Ensemble in Residence with Jennifer Koh and Shai Wosner at the Laguna Beach Music Festival; they embarked on their second large-scale production with director James Darrah and production company Chromatic called FAILURE.; and the group premiered a few dozen new works, including composer David Lang's "Anatomy Theater" at the LA Opera. In October, *wild Up* made their New York debut on the American Composers Orchestra's SONIC festival with a new program called "West."

wild Up has been featured at numerous West Coast cultural spaces including the Music Academy of the West, Santa Barbara Arts and Lectures, the Broad Stage, Zipper Hall at the Colburn School, REDCAT, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Beyond Baroque, the Armory Center for the Arts, Santa Ana Sites and Echo Park's Jensen Rec Center. Their recordings of Shostakovich, Rzewski, Messiaen and Los Angeles composers have been featured on KUSC, WNYC, Q2, KPFK, Alex Ross's blog The Rest Is Noise and American Public Media's

Performance Today, among many others.

About Jacaranda Music

Jacaranda's creators, Patrick Scott and Mark Alan Hilt, have an insightful way of programming music that lifts the concert experience to an exciting level. Jacaranda presents music mostly missing from the cultural life of Los Angeles in compelling performances that make you wonder why. This team brings to Jacaranda a broad and unexpected background. Their critically acclaimed approach has proven fresh and effective in re-imagining the concert-going experience with unusually informative program notes.

Over its thirteen seasons, Jacaranda has consistently presented exciting music that spans many eras selected for strong potential to enter the standard repertoire of the 21st century. With an emphasis on living composers, these critically acclaimed concerts are organized as journeys, or stories, that engage young concertgoers, and satisfy the curiosity and standards of experienced listeners. Performed by highly accomplished musicians, each concert has a point of view, and each season, as a whole, is crisscrossed with musical and historical relationships that gratify on many levels.

About St. Lawrence String Quartet

"Modern...dramatic...superb...wickedly attentive...with a hint of rock 'n roll energy..." are just a few ways critics describe the musical phenomenon that is the St Lawrence String Quartet. The SLSQ is renowned for the intensity of its performances, its breadth of repertoire, and its commitment to concert experiences that are at once intellectually exciting and emotionally alive.

Highlights in 2016-2017 include performances with Gustavo Dudamel and the LA Philharmonic and Marin Alsop and the Baltimore Symphony in John Adams's *Absolute Jest* for string quartet and orchestra, and the European premieres of Adams's second string quartet. Fiercely committed to collaboration with living composers, the SLSQ's fruitful partnership with Adams, Jonathan Berger, Osvaldo Golijov and many others has yielded some of the finest additions to the quartet literature in recent years. The Quartet is also especially dedicated to the music of Haydn, and are recording his groundbreaking set of six Op. 20 quartets in high-definition video for a free, universal release online in 2017. According to *The New Yorker*, "...no other North American quartet plays the music of Haydn with more intelligence, expressivity, and force..."

Established in Toronto in 1989, the SLSQ quickly earned acclaim at top international chamber music competitions and was soon playing hundreds of concerts per year worldwide. They established an ongoing residency at Spoleto Festival USA, made prize-winning recordings for EMI of music by Schumann, Tchaikovsky, and Golijov, earning two Grammy nominations and a host of other prizes before being appointed ensemble-in-residence at Stanford University in 1998.

At Stanford, the SLSQ is at the forefront of intellectual life on campus. The SLSQ directs the music department's chamber music program, and frequently collaborates with other departments including the Schools of Law, Medicine, Business and Education. The Quartet frequently performs at Stanford Live, hosts an annual chamber music seminar, and runs the Emerging String Quartet Program through which they mentor the next generation of young quartets. In the words of Alex Ross of *The New Yorker*: "The St. Lawrence are remarkable not simply for the quality of their music making, exalted as it is, but for the joy they take in the act of connection."

About Christopher Rountree (Artistic Director / Conductor, *wild Up*)

We see *Lady Macbeth* in a dozen crooning silhouettes washing blood out of rags in a bathroom; Stravinsky pouring out of an abandoned warehouse; a violinist cutting himself out of duct tape with a razor as his violin sits gathering feedback; and a lost John Adams suite at Walt Disney Concert Hall. Conductor and composer Christopher Rountree is standing at the intersection of classical music, new music, performance art and pop.

Rountree, 32, is the founder, conductor and creative director of the pathbreaking L.A. chamber orchestra *wild Up*. The group has been called "Searing. Penetrating. And Thrilling" by NPR's *Performance Today* and named "Best Classical Music of 2015" by the *New York Times*. *wild Up* started in 2010 with no funding and no musicians, driven only by Rountree's vision of a world-class orchestra that creates visceral, provocative experiences that are unmoored from classical traditions.

Whether he's conducting, composing or curating a program, Rountree's approach – with its “infectious enthusiasm” (*Los Angeles Times*) and “elegant clarity” (*New York Times*) – is united by extremely high energy and a deeply engaged relationship between a score, musicians and audience.

“For most people, programming and conducting are about restraint, intellect. I want to get rid of restraint: I want to tear the thing's guts out. I want to go all the way there,” Rountree says. “I want to empower musicians. I want to energize an audience. It's not that I'm a ‘conduit for the score’ – everyone in the hall is a part of a circuit that connects the conductor, the musicians, the score and the listeners. A concert shouldn't leave people when people leave the concert hall.”

If there is a dam separating establishment classical music from more adventurous forms, Rountree finds himself spilling over both sides – conducting Opera Omaha here, and writing an experimental theater work for 12 singers singing Haydn backwards in the Philadelphia Museum of Art there.

This year, Rountree makes his Chicago Symphony, LA Opera and Atlanta Opera debuts, returns to the Music Academy of the West and twice to the San Francisco Symphony's SoundBox series, conducts the Interlochen World Youth Orchestra on the New York Philharmonic's 2016 Biennial, joins Jennifer Koh and Shai Wosner with *wild Up* at the Laguna Beach Music Festival, and conducts Diavolo's new show “L'Espace du Temps: Glass, Adams, and Salonen.” As a composer, his recent premieres and commissions include a new piece for The Crossing at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, a re-orchestration of Esa-Pekka Salonen's *Foreign Bodies*, a choral work for Bjork's choir *Graduale Nobili* in Reykjavik, Iceland, and two new pieces for Jennifer Koh: a short theater piece on the New York Philharmonic's Biennial, and a large-scale concerto co-commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic for Jenny and *wild Up*.

Last year, Rountree founded an education intensive with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, continued an education partnership at the Colburn School, and taught “Creativity and Consciousness” at Bard College's Longy School. He joined the production company Chromatic, conducted Opera Omaha performing John Adams' “A Flowering Tree,” debuted on the San Francisco Symphony's SoundBox series, and started a three-year stint as guest conductor of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.

With his eclectic style and resume, he's been tapped to curate and create events for contemporary art institutions including the Getty Museum, MCA Denver, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and UCLA's Hammer Museum, where a long-running *wild Up* residency brought the group to national prominence.

Through it all, Rountree is guided by his vision of a more engaging classical music culture that blows up the old boxes.

“I don't have enough tattoos to be the badboy provocateur of classical music,” Rountree jokes. “But is the goal to dismantle the artform and build something new – something bursting with life, contemporary relevance, and deep mindfulness? That is exactly what we're doing.”

Calendar Listing for The Age of Adams

Venue: Valley Performing Arts Center
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, CA 91330

Tickets: **In Person:** VPAC Ticket Office, located in the VPAC Courtyard
By Phone: (818) 677-3000
Online: ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org

Event: ***American Berserk***
Louie Moreau Gottschalk's *The Banjo, Ojos Criollos*
Scott Joplin's *Paragon Rag, Bethena, Maple Leaf Rag*
Art Tatum/Duke Ellington's *In a Sentimental Mood*

John Adams' *American Berserk*, *John's Book of Alleged Dances (3)*, *Grand Pianola Music*

Date: Saturday, January 14 at 8:00pm

Price: Starting at \$38

Event: **St. Lawrence String Quartet**

Adams Quintet No 1

Beethoven's String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132

Date: Friday, February 3 at 8:00pm

Price: Starting at \$63

Please Note: This will be a general admission event on the VPAC stage

Event: ***wild Up, Adams/Punk Rock/Player Piano***

Date: Thursday, February 16 at 8:00pm

Price: Starting at \$63

Please Note: This will be a general admission event on the VPAC stage

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