



CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS

Solo Contrabass & Washtub Bass

Christopher Williams (1981, San Diego) is a wayfarer on the body-mind continuum. His medium is music. PhD, Leiden University (with Richard Barrett and Marcel Cobussen); BA, University of California, San Diego (with Charles Curtis, Chaya Czernowin, and Bertram Turetzky).

As a composer and contrabassist, Williams's work runs the gamut from chamber music, improvisation, and radio art to collaborations with dancers, sound artists, and visual artists. Collaborators include Derek Bailey, Compagnie Ouïe/Dire, LaMonte Young's Theatre of Eternal Music, Ferran Fages, Barbara Held, Robin Hayward (as Reidemeister Move), Christian Kesten, Hans W. Koch, Christina Kubisch, Liminar, Maulwerker, Charlie Morrow, David Moss, Andrea Neumann, Mary Oliver and Rozemarie Heggen, Ben Patterson, Robyn Schulkowsky, Martin Sonderkamp, and Ensemble SuperMusique. Work presented throughout Europe & USA, including VPRO Radio 6 (Holland), Deutschlandfunk Kultur, the Museum of Contemporary Art Barcelona, Volksbühne Berlin, and the American Documentary Film Festival.

Williams' artistic research takes the form of both conventional academic publications and practice-based multimedia projects. His native digital dissertation *Tactile Paths: on and through Notation for Improvisers* is available at <http://www.tactilepaths.net>. He also curates the Berlin concert series KONTRAKLANG and works with sound experience makers MorrowSound.

CONTACT

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Williams knows how to create a dialogue with his sonic environment in which he actually manages to say musical things – something few improvisors are capable of.

– Ben Watson, author of Derek Bailey and the Story of Free Improvisation

... this enormous instrument... these impossible sounds... yes a dream, a most surprising dream, and also, I must say... a blast.

– Salvador Giral, Núvol. Diari digital de cultura.

... entrancing...

– Mark Swed, LA Times, on Williams' and Charlie Morrow's Arcanum 17

Program 2019

PHILIP CORNER: *A THOROUGH BASS, AND THOROUGHLY... BASED* (2011)

<https://soundcloud.com/christopherisnow/a-thorough-bass-and-thoroughly-based/s-blRsO>

Corner's inimitable handwritten verbal notation "for a plucked one-string instrument", here played on the washtub bass: an inverted East German galvanized steel wash basin, a metal D string from the contrabass, and a broomstick.

CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS: *WATER MUSIC* (2013)

<https://vimeo.com/86058614>

"Drip drop, drip drap drep drop. So it goes on, this watery melody, for ever without an end. Inconclusive, inconsequent, formless, it is always on the point of deviating into sense and form. Every now and then you will hear a complete phrase of rounded melody. And then – drip drop, dri-drep, di-drap – the old inconsequence sets in once more." (From Aldous Huxley's "Water Music", 1920)

SCOTT MCLAUGHLIN: *NEW WORK FOR CONTRABASS AND RING PREPARATIONS* (2019)

Show and tell of ring preparations: https://youtu.be/qA_3mg7jwms

Irish composer and cellist Scott McLaughlin's first piece for solo bass using his ingenious 3D-printed plastic ring preparations for bowed string instruments. The rings create seductive interference patterns, or energy "pools", among the strings. The player becomes like a tightrope walker moving between points of balance and tension.

CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS: *SING, BUCKET* (2019)

Most washtub basses have a wad of duct tape on the inside of the tub to dampen the sound and get a good percussive "thud". My washtub does not – it is a bell. Bowing a loose string just right reveals a song within the rich overtones of the tub.

WERNER DAFELDECKER: *LIPIDVESIKEL* (2018).

<https://soundcloud.com/christopherisnow/lipidvesikel/s-hor6z>

Best known as the bass player of Polwechsel, Dafeldecker conceived this structured improvisation from a drawing of proteins taken from evolutionary biologist Renée Schroeder's book *Die Erfindung des Menschen*. The bass lies on the floor, its strings and hardware played percussively with both hands, and the bow is used as a preparation.

Tech Rider

In principle the program is totally acoustic. The organizer should supply

- 1 adjustable piano bench or chair with no arms ca. 65-70cm high
- 1 music stand
- 1 carpet or blanket ca. 2x1m to lay under the bass for *Lipidvesikel*

If the venue is large, noisy, or dead (i.e. delicate acoustic sound doesn't carry well), the washtub bass must be amplified. In this case, the organizer should also supply

- 1 condenser mic (e.g. Røde NT5) + boom stand
- Stereo PA

