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**COMPOSER AND BASSIST LISA MEZZACAPPA  
PREMIERES *GLORIOUS RAVAGE*,  
A “PANORAMIC SONG CYCLE”  
FOR LARGE ENSEMBLE WITH FILMS  
September 26 in Los Angeles & October 1-2 in San Francisco**



***Glorious Ravage* is inspired by the writings of lady adventurers of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

**Visit: [Project website](#) with work-in-progress video, audio, writings**

San Francisco, July 10, 2015—San Francisco Bay Area composer and bassist **Lisa Mezzacappa**, with Brava! For Women and the Arts, announces the world premiere performances of *Glorious Ravage*, an immersive new evening-length song cycle for a large ensemble of California improvisers with films commissioned from Bay Area experimental filmmakers. *Glorious Ravage* features new compositions by Mezzacappa, and takes as its inspiration the writings of lady adventurers near the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, who trekked to the wildest parts of the earth to discover, escape, and lose themselves. *Glorious Ravage* premieres over a week in fall 2015: Saturday September 26 at REDCAT, Los Angeles, as part of the Angel City Jazz Festival; and Thursday and Friday October 1 and 2 at Brava Theater Center, San Francisco. Two work-in

progress events are planned in August, at the de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park, featuring site-specific improvisations and musical excerpts as part of the Friday Nights at the de Young series on August 7 and 21. The work previews at UC Irvine on September 25 as part of the Gassmann Electronic Music Series.

*Glorious Ravage* is the product of extensive collaboration between Mezzacappa and four moving image artists—**Konrad Steiner**, **Alfonso Alvarez**, **Kathleen Quillian** and **Janis Crystal Lipzin**—all significant figures in the Bay Area experimental film and video community for decades, working in video, animation and manipulated found and archival film footage. The ensemble features fourteen virtuoso instrumentalists from the San Francisco Bay Area and Southern California: **Myra Melford** (piano); **Mark Dresser** (contrabass); **Nicole Mitchell** (flute); **Vinny Golia** (winds); **Michael Dessen** (trombone); **Darren Johnston** (trumpet); **Kyle Bruckmann** (oboe); **Cory Wright** (reeds); **Dina Maccabee** (viola); **Kjell Nordeson** (percussion); **Jordan Glenn** (drums); **John Finkbeiner** (electric guitar); **Tim Perkis** (electronics) and **Mezzacappa** (bass and conduction); plus versatile Brooklyn vocalist **Fay Victor**: “one of the most extraordinary vocalists on the scene today... a wonder to behold” (*Cadence Magazine*). Lighting design is by **Allen Willner** (inkBOAT, Theater of Yugen).

Co-produced by Mezzacappa and Brava! For Women and the Arts, *Glorious Ravage* is the culmination of Mezzacappa’s creative efforts over more than a dozen years, as a significant music curator, producer, and cross-disciplinary collaborator in the Bay Area, Los Angeles and abroad. The project is supported by the Multi Arts Production (MAP) Fund, the Zellerbach Family Foundation, and Headlands Center for the Arts’ Alumni New Works Program.

## THE MUSIC

*Glorious Ravage* is a song cycle for improvisers, with lyrics drawn from the travelogues, journals and letters of Victorian-era adventurers **Mary Kingsley**, **Ida Pfeiffer**, **Isabelle Eberhardt**, **Louise Arner Boyd**, **Isabella Bird**, **Marianne North** and **Annie Peck**, among others. Mezzacappa has distilled the most resonant themes of these evocative, personal texts from reading dozens of these women’s accounts, and her music will explore their feelings of isolation and alienation, their restlessness, their unflagging ambition, their almost obsessive quests for new experiences, and their wonder at the natural world and its inhabitants. These women’s lives were shaped by a powerful drive to discover, to escape, to experience, and to reimagine themselves and their lives in ways most of their contemporaries could never have imagined. The backdrop of their adventures was a planet still largely unknown, and seemingly limitless in its resources and wild beauty. Even though many of these accounts are nested in an ignorant, privileged European Colonial mindset, many of these women were truly ahead of their

time in imagining alternatives to their realities, and their language and outlook are at times refreshingly, startlingly modern.

The music for *Glorious Ravage* conjures these passions and reflections into a work of the present moment, showcasing the virtuoso improvisers in the ensemble, their individual voices woven into a collective fabric that embraces many genres and sounds, from delicate chamber art song to expansive abstract soundscapes, groovy and propulsive jazz and edgy indie rock to intricate contemporary classical music. Mezzacappa has formed her Grapevine Orchestra to connect several of California's vibrant musical communities which rarely have opportunities to interact and collaborate—like-minded musicians living and working in San Diego, Irvine, Long Beach, Valencia, Oakland, Berkeley and San Francisco. Some of her musical relationships in this ensemble span more than a decade, while others are brand new meetings.

The music for *Glorious Ravage* will unfold as a series of a dozen songs featuring Victor and various permutations of the ensemble, from intimate solo and duo pieces to expansive orchestrations featuring the entire ensemble. Mezzacappa's musical inspirations for this project are as diverse as her listening habits, from the vocal and orchestral music of new music titans Luciano Berio and Gyorgy Ligeti, to the visionary music of free jazz vocalist Jeanne Lee and Ornette Coleman's Science Fiction ensemble with vocalist Asha Puthli, to the art pop of Blonde Redhead, the Flaming Lips and Elvis Costello. In performance, Mezzacappa will conduct and share bass duties with Mark Dresser.

## THE FILMS

Oakland artist **Kathleen Quillian** is creating a series of short, quirky hand-animated video "postcards," each representing some far-off locale visited by one of these explorers – Annie Peck climbing Mount Huascarán in the Andes, Isabella Bird atop a volcano in the Sandwich Islands, Marianne North in the uncharted forests of Brazil, Mary Kingsley in the mangrove swamps of West Africa. Veteran Marin media artist **Janis Crystal Lipzin** has gained access to the polar explorer (and Marin socialite) Louise Arner Boyd's film footage from her trips to the Arctic circle, and will be merging some of that archival footage into her own films and photos shot in the Arctic.

Berkeley filmmaker **Alfonso Alvarez**, an avid cyclist, is interested in the ways these travelers got around in the American West during and after the Gold Rush, and has been researching women's bicycle adventures, as well as visitors exploring our region by steam ship, stage coach and train. The collaboration with San Francisco filmmaker and curator **Konrad Steiner** will address one of the more unsettling aspects of these women's narratives—the exploitive and racist Colonial system that made their travels possible—by exploring the idea of

absence— all that might have been here, or anywhere, before the white settlers and explorers arrived, and calling attention to the indigenous voices excluded from these travelers’ accounts.

## PROCESS

*Glorious Ravage* has been developed at the Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, in a series of artist residencies throughout 2015, and will be previewed in two free public programs at San Francisco’s de Young Museum in August, featuring excerpts and site-specific improvisations inspired by the physical space of the museum, and themes from the larger work. On Friday August 7 (6:30-8:30pm), Mezzacappa will lead an ensemble of eight musicians (including vocalist Victor) in a series of performances in the museum’s main atrium, Wilsey Court, featuring expanded and abstracted excerpts of the *Glorious Ravage* compositions, with Alvarez and Steiner projecting preview footage from the work. On Friday August 21 (7-8:30pm), Mezzacappa leads a wind quartet in a series of short performances in the museum’s Hamon Observation Tower.

The process of creating the work has been an adventure in itself. The past year has found Mezzacappa and her collaborators digging through letters and field journals at an archive in a Marin corporate park; visiting with strangers in their homes to record their voices and handwriting as they reproduced language from a travel diary from the 1850s; donning art handler’s gloves to peruse fragile manuscripts and letters at UC Berkeley’s Bancroft Library; driving to Davis to shoot video at the US Bicycling Hall of Fame; tracking down friends of friends of friends in remote neighborhoods to access unique CA historical photo collections; hunting down vintage dress designs to re-create a Victorian woman’s riding outfit; and cashing in favors at the National Archives to gain access to some of the first video footage ever shot of the Arctic circle.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY



[Lisa Mezzacappa](#), “one of the most imaginative figures on the Bay Area creative jazz scene” (*San Jose Mercury News*), is a bassist, composer, and music curator and producer. An active collaborator in the Bay Area music community for more than a dozen years, her music spans avant-garde jazz to ethereal chamber music, scores for experimental film and immersive sound installations. Mezzacappa was voted “Rising Star” bassist in the *Downbeat* 2013 and 2014 critics polls, and leads her own groups Bait & Switch, Nightshade, the Lisa Mezzacappa Trio, Eartheaters and the Interlopers, and co-leads the ensembles duo B., Cylinder, BODABODA, LMNOP, and Les Gwan Jupons. She has released her music on the Clean Feed, NoBusiness, Leo, NotTwo, Evander and Edgetone record labels,

and has recorded as a sideperson for the Tzadik, Kadima and Porto Franco labels. Her own label, Queen Bee Records, was launched in 2013 to disseminate the work of her West Coast creative musician peers. Lisa organizes concerts for jazz and experimental music in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and collaborates frequently on cross-disciplinary projects in sound installation, experimental film, and visual art.

As curator, she programs the annual JazzPOP concert series at the UCLA Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, now in its 10th year; and a live cinema series, Mission Eye & Ear, at Artists' Television Access. She founded the Monday Makeout creative music series in the Mission District of San Francisco in 2009, and in 2013 initiated the Best Coast Jazz Composers series at San Francisco's Center for New Music.

Lisa has been artist-in-residence at Djerassi Resident Artists Program (2008, 2013), Headlands Center for the Arts (2006, 2015), the Banff International Jazz Workshop (2000), and the Painted Bride Arts Center (2000). She holds an MA in ethnomusicology from UC Berkeley (2003), and a BA in music from the University of Virginia (1997). She has performed at countless Bay Area venues including Intersection for the Arts, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, SFMOMA, Yoshi's, the Jazzschool, and the de Young Museum, San Francisco; as well as the Earshot Jazz Festival, Seattle; the Montreal Jazz Festival and Victoriaville Festival de Musique Actuelle, Canada; the Monterey Jazz Festival, CA; Moers Festival, Germany; and Novara Jazz Festival, Italy. Lisa has been awarded grants by the MAP Fund, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco Friends of Chamber Music, the Zellerbach Family Foundation, American Composers Forum, the City of Oakland, Meet the Composer and Southern Exposure/the Andy Warhol Foundation.

## **PRESENTERS**

**Brava! For Women in the Arts**, a professional arts organization, owns and operates the historic Brava Theater Center in the Mission District of San Francisco. BRAVA's mission is to produce, present and cultivate the artistic expression of women, people of color, youth, LGBTQ and other unheard voices. Founded in 1986, Brava! For Women in the Arts was created to give voice to the unspoken realities of women's lives through the creation of new theatrical works. Participants have included prominent San Francisco feminists, community leaders, activists, and artists Cherrie Moraga, Amy Mueller, Jewelle Gomez and Ellen Sebastian Chang. BRAVA has produced award-winning premieres by Diana Son, Eve Ensler, Debbie Swisher, Reno, Cherylene Lee, Suzan-Lori Parks, Culture Clash, Joan Holden, Anne Galjour, Elizabeth Summers, Kate Rigg, Dan Guerrero, and Mabou Mines. Comprised of a Main Stage with world-class lighting and sound, a Second Stage that doubles as a rehearsal studio, and a contemporary lobby/gallery

showcasing visual art, Brava Theater Center has become synonymous with thought-provoking shows that spotlight artists from around the Bay Area and beyond.

**The Angel City Jazz Festival** – LA’s only non-commercial jazz and new music festival – was founded in 2008 by music promoter Rocco Somazzi. That year the festival presented 13 acts, including Wayne Horvitz’ Sweeter Than The Day, Leni Stern, Motoko Honda, Alan Pasqua, Nels Cline & Arthur Blythe in one day on 2 stages at the Barnsdall Art Park. From 2009, Cryptogramophone’s founder Jeff Gauthier became a festival co-producer and the festival moved to the Ford Amphitheatre in Hollywood. Since then the festival has grown into an essential multi-day celebration of cutting-edge jazz at some of the most exciting and prestigious venues in Hollywood and Downtown LA, like REDCAT, Zipper Hall, the Blue Whale, the Aratani Theatre and Barnsdall Art Park. The Angel City Jazz Festival consistently features the most innovative and original national and international jazz musicians working today, balancing established jazz artists with emerging talent, and focusing on west coast creative jazz, past, present and future.

#### **TICKETS & PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

The world premiere performance of *Glorious Ravage* at REDCAT, 631 W 2nd St, Los Angeles, CA, is Saturday September 26 at 8pm, as part of a double bill with the Mark Dresser Quintet. Tickets for that performance are \$25 and available at [www.angelcityjazz.com](http://www.angelcityjazz.com) beginning in September. The San Francisco Bay Area performances are Thursday, October 1 and Friday, October 2 at Brava Theater Center, 2781 24th St., in the Mission District of San Francisco. Tickets, priced at \$20 general admission/\$15 for students and seniors, are on sale now, online at [www.brava.org](http://www.brava.org) and in person beginning one hour before showtime at the Brava Theater box office. Public programs planned at the de Young Museum, 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Dr., in San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park, are free admission, on Friday, August 7 from 6:30-8:30pm, and Friday, August 21 from 7-8:30pm.

#### **CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE**

**Event category: PERFORMING ARTS / MUSIC / FILM**

**What:** Friday Nights at the de Young: Lisa Mezzacappa

**When:** Friday August 7, 2015 from 6:30-8:30pm

**Where:** de Young Museum, 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Dr., Golden Gate Park, SF

**Tickets:** Admission is free.

**Description:** Composer and bassist Lisa Mezzacappa presents a preview of her new work “Glorious Ravage” as part of the free Friday Nights at the de Young series. Mezzacappa leads an ensemble of eight musicians with video projection, in a series of site-specific performances in and around the museum’s Wilsey Court.

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**What:** Friday Nights at the de Young: Lisa Mezzacappa  
**When:** Friday August 21, 2015 from 7-8:30pm  
**Where:** de Young Museum, 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Dr., Golden Gate Park, SF  
**Tickets:** Admission is free.  
**Description:** Composer and bassist Lisa Mezzacappa presents a preview of her new work “Glorious Ravage” as part of the free Friday Nights at the de Young series. Mezzacappa leads an ensemble of wind players, in a series of site-specific musical performances in unique spaces in and around the museum.

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**What:** Lisa Mezzacappa: Glorious Ravage  
**When:** Saturday September 26, 2015 at 8:00pm  
**Where:** REDCAT, 631 W 2nd St, Los Angeles, CA  
**Tickets:** Tickets, priced at \$25, are available online at [www.angelcityjazz.com](http://www.angelcityjazz.com) beginning in September.  
**Description:** Composer and bassist **Lisa Mezzacappa**, with Angel City Jazz Festival, presents the world premiere of “Glorious Ravage,” a panoramic free jazz song cycle featuring a large ensemble of California improvisers with films by **Janis Crystal Lipzin**, **Kathleen Quillian**, **Alfonso Alvarez** and **Konrad Steiner**. “Glorious Ravage” is inspired by the adventures and writings of lady explorers near the turn of the last century, who trekked to the wildest parts of the earth, to escape, to discover, and to lose themselves.

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**What:** Lisa Mezzacappa: Glorious Ravage  
**When:** Thursday October 1 and Friday October 2, 2015 at 8:00pm  
**Where:** Brava Theater Center, 2781 24th St., San Francisco, CA  
**Tickets:** Tickets, priced at \$20 general admission/\$15 for students and seniors, are available online at [www.brava.org](http://www.brava.org) or in person beginning one hour before showtime at the Brava box office.  
**Description:** Composer and bassist **Lisa Mezzacappa**, with Brava! For Women in the Arts, presents “Glorious Ravage,” a panoramic free jazz song cycle featuring a large ensemble of California improvisers with films by **Janis Crystal Lipzin**, **Kathleen Quillian**, **Alfonso Alvarez** and **Konrad Steiner**. “Glorious Ravage” is inspired by the adventures and writings of lady explorers near the turn of the last century, who trekked to the wildest parts of the earth, to escape, to discover, and to lose themselves.

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