

## FY11-12 Cultural Equity Grants Panelist Biographies

### Community Arts and Education and Grants Committee February 6, 2012

#### **Pamela Z**

##### **Composer/performer and Media artist**

Pamela Z is a San Francisco-based composer/performer and media artist who works primarily with voice, live electronic processing, sampling technology, and video. A pioneer of live digital looping techniques, she creates solo works combining experimental extended vocal techniques, operatic bel canto, found objects, text, digital processing, and MIDI controllers that allow her to manipulate sound with physical gestures. In addition to her solo work, she has composed and recorded scores for dance, theatre, film, and new music chamber ensembles. Her large-scale multi-media works have been presented at venues including Theater Artaud and ODC in San Francisco, and The Kitchen in New York, and her media works have been presented in exhibitions at the Whitney Museum (NY), the Diözesanmuseum (Cologne), and the Krannert Art Museum (IL). Her multi-media opera *Wunderkabinet* – inspired by the Museum of Jurassic Technology (co-composed with Matthew Brubeck) has been presented at The LAB Gallery (San Francisco), REDCAT (Disney Hall, Los Angeles), and Open Ears Festival, Toronto. Pamela Z has toured extensively throughout the US, Europe, and Japan. She has performed in numerous festivals including Bang on a Can at Lincoln Center (New York), Interlink (Japan), Other Minds (San Francisco), La Biennale di Venezia (Italy), and Pina Bausch Tanztheater Festival (Wuppertal, Germany). She is the recipient of numerous awards including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Creative Capital Fund, the CalArts Alpert Award in the Arts, The MAP Fund, the ASCAP Music Award, an Ars Electronica honorable mention, and the NEA and Japan/US Friendship Commission Fellowship. She holds a music degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

#### **Yasmen Mehta**

##### **Choreographer, Dancer, and Arts Administrator**

Yasmen Mehta has been a professional modern dance choreographer and dancer, performing nationally and internationally for fifteen years, with the California Contemporary Dancers. She retired from the company in 2004. Yasmen has also been a dance panelist for the Zellerbach Family Foundation for about seven years. From 1990 to 1996 she was the Director of Operations for the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival. In addition Mehta has worked for the Women's Philharmonic and the San Francisco Dance Center for Alonzo King from 1996 to 1999. Yasmen currently teaches yoga and Pilates around the Bay Area, including the San Francisco Police Academy.

#### **Erika Chong Shuch**

##### **Choreographer, Director, Dancer**

Erika Chong Shuch is a choreographer and director who makes original performance work with her company, the Erika Chong Shuch Performance Project, a resident company at Intersection for the Arts since 2004. Erika has recently been working in Korea on a new work inspired by and in collaboration with North Korean defectors, which will premiere in Seoul and at the SF International Arts Festival in 2013. The company has been commissioned by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts to present *After All* (2008) and Dancers' Group's ONSITE program to present *Love Everywhere* (2010). A recipient of the Gerbode Foundation's Emerging Choreographer's Award and a Goldie Award, Erika's work has been supported by residencies at Headlands Center for the Arts, Djerassi Residency Program, ODC, and Mullae Art Space in Seoul, Korea. Erika worked under the mentorship of Joe Goode through CHIME, a program of the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. She also directs plays such as *The Lily's Revenge* by Taylor Mac at the Magic Theatre and *God's Ear*, by Jenny Schwartz, for the Shotgun Players. As a choreographer of plays, Erika works continually with companies such as CAL Shakes (2009-present)



and Campo Santo. Erika is an adjunct faculty member at A.C.T.'s MFA program, and has created new work on students as a guest artist at universities such as UC Berkeley (2008- 2011), UC Davis, University of San Francisco, and Naropa University. Erika teaches workshops to folks interested in creating interdisciplinary work.

**Gabriella Lena Frank**  
**Composer**

A member of G. Schirmer's prestigious roster of artists, Frank creates work that incorporates Latino/Latin American mythology, archeology, art, poetry, and folk music into western classical forms, reflecting her Peruvian-American heritage. Among numerous awards, Frank has received a 2009 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2009 Latin Grammy for Best Classical Contemporary Composition, and a 2010 United States Artists Fellowship given each year to fifty of America's finest artists across eight disciplines.

Frank's compositions have been described by critics as "luminous... bursting with fresh originality" (Los Angeles Times), "of unearthly beauty" (Miami Sun-Sentinel), and "brilliant" (Chicago Tribune). In 2011, the all-Frank Naxos CD "Hilos" broke into the top 100 classical recordings on Billboard in the first week of its release and earned Frank a 2012 Grammy nomination as pianist with the Alias Ensemble in the category of Best Small Ensemble Performance. The Berkeley Symphony gave the West Coast premiere of Frank's Peregrinos (Pilgrims) at Music Director Joana Carneiro's debut concert in October 2009. Peregrinos, originally composed for the Indianapolis Symphony, depicts a world inspired by the stories of Latino immigrants in Indianapolis and was the subject of the Emmy-nominated PBS documentary "Peregrinos/Pilgrims: A Musical Journey."

Other recent premieres include New Andean Songs for the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Green Umbrella new music series, ¡Chayraq! for Yo Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble, Quijotadas for the Brentano String Quartet, Tres Mitos de Mi Tierra for the King's Singers, and La Centinela y la Paloma (The Keeper and the Dove) for soprano Dawn Upshaw and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra under the baton of Joana Carneiro (based on original new texts by frequent collaborator and Pulitzer Prize playwright Nilo Cruz). Frank is currently at work on new compositions for the Berkeley Symphony (in collaboration with soprano Jessica Rivera and the San Francisco Girls Chorus), the Cleveland Orchestra, the Los Angeles Master Chorale (in collaboration with the Andean music group Huayucaltia), and guitarist Manuel Barrueco, among others.

Born in Berkeley in 1972, Frank holds a bachelor's and a master's degree from Rice University, and a doctorate from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She currently resides in Oakland and travels often to Latin America.

**Roberto Varea**  
**Associate Professor in Theater, University of San Francisco**

Roberto G. Varea began his career in theater in his native city of Cordoba, Argentina. In the US, he has directed numerous productions and workshops associated with new play development, particularly with Latin@-Chican@ artists. Roberto is the founding artistic director of Soapstone Theatre Company, a collective of male ex-offenders and female survivors of violent crime, El Teatro Jornalero!, a performance company that brings the voice of Latin American immigrant workers to the stage and founding member of the SF-based performance collective Secos & Mojados. He is a founding faculty of the Performing Arts and Social Justice Program at the University of San Francisco, where he also directs the Center for Latino Studies in the Americas (CELASA). Roberto is Associate Editor of "peace Review" (Routledge, U.S.), and guest editor of "e-misférica" (NYU) and "Contemporary Theater Review" (Routledge, U.K.). His two-volume anthology "Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict" has just been published by New Village Press (



### **Kevin Seaman**

#### **Program Assistant, San Francisco Foundation**

Kevin Seaman received his B.A. in Theatre Arts from the University of Northern Colorado and has appeared on-stage locally with various theatrical festivals and at various venues around the Bay Area. He has also toured throughout California with San Francisco Shakespeare Festival's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Kevin was a founding member of The Living Room, a live/work art collective in South Berkeley and has sat on planning committees for Yerba Buena Center for the Arts' Big Idea Night parties. He is also an inaugural champion of The Institute for Aesthetic's Drinking and Dancing Competition (along with dance partner Kate Dunphy). Kevin's artistic practice focuses on performance and video art, fusing his theatrical history of over-the-top comedy, absurdism, and costume with strong DIY and Internet meme-based aesthetics resulting in work that is accessible and light-hearted. His short film SILENCE=FILTH was presented at FRAMELINE35 and has been featured on various blogs including Joe.My.God, The Bilerico Project, and Towleroad. His persona Dr. Zebrovski has generated nearly 25,000 hits on YouTube and has performed interactive psychic dances in various venues throughout San Francisco. As an advocate for the queer community, Kevin has led community workshops in grantseeking and collaborative creation for the National Queer Arts Festival as well as bringing the Bay Area queer arts scene to the attention of national funders by co-facilitating *Queering the Arts: Aesthetics and Economies* at the Grantmakers in the Arts 2011 conference. As Arts and Culture Program Assistant at The San Francisco Foundation, Kevin has adjudicated individual artist and organizational grants through the multiple rounds of the Fund For Artists Matching Commissions, the Bay Area Documentary Fund, and the Koshland Arts Mini-Grants and has facilitated panels for several Art Awards including the Murphy and Cadogan Fellowships in the Fine Arts and the John Guttman Photography Fellowship Award. His work is viewable on his in-progress website, SeamanArt.com, as well as his YouTube channel.

### **Lisa Steindler**

#### **Executive Artistic Director, Z Space**

Lisa Steindler is the Executive Artistic Director of Z Space. Annually, Z Space has over 10 works in various stages of development, nurturing a wide variety of artists in the common goal of increasing visibility and opportunity. Lisa also serves as the Artistic Director of Encore Theatre Company for the past 18 years where she has shepherded such established playwrights as Adam Bock, Claire Chafee, Adam Rapp, Leigh Fondakowski, Peter Sinn Nachtrieb and Steve Yockey. Lisa has produced over 20 world premiere productions in the past 15 years. She is an Equity actor and has performed in many plays over the years, including Adam Bock's award winning *Five Flights*, and American Conservatory Theatre's production of *Angels in America*. She has also directed many productions, including the world premiere of Claire Chafee's *Darwin's Finches*. From 1996-2004 Lisa also ran the Zoetrope Live Series at Francis Ford Coppola's studios in North Beach. She also created A.C.T.'s ArtReach program, which she ran for 17 years bringing theatre into the Bay Area public schools. Lisa taught acting classes at Actor's Alliance in San Diego, California, and the American Conservatory Theater, and has experience as an independent casting agent, commercial and film actress, talent agent and private acting coach. Lisa received a Master of Fine Arts from the American Conservatory Theater and a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from the University of Vermont.

### **Deborah Steinberg**

#### **Director of Artist Services for WomenArts**

Ms. Steinberg is responsible for editing the WomenArts Network profiles, as well as writing and editing other on-line content and the monthly funding newsletters. Deborah holds a B.A. in Creative Writing and Literature from Bard College and an M.A. in English Literature from the University of Bordeaux. She is the founding editor and events coordinator of *Louis Liard*, a Franco-American magazine of creative writing and art, and she has over eight years of experience as a freelance editor and an instructor of English as a Second Language. Deborah writes fiction and has sung in musical projects in France and the U.S.