

MODERNISM

For Immediate Release

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SAN FRANCISCO START-UP MANUFACTURES INSTRUMENTS FOR JAM SESSIONS WITH ALIENS

Unique Designs By Experimental Philosopher Jonathon Keats Emit Gamma Rays And Gravitational Waves – San Francisco Showroom Opens On July 24th With Instrument Demonstrations And Release Of Universal Anthem

As the world succumbs to isolationism and xenophobia, embracing trade wars and border walls, a San Francisco start-up has partnered with a pioneering university music department to facilitate universal connection. Enlisting technologies developed at the University of North Carolina–Asheville (UNCA), Intergalactic Omniphonics is producing musical instruments for beings across the cosmos.

"We're creating the first practical tools to let musicians everywhere jam together," says experimental philosopher Jonathon Keats, the founder of Intergalactic Omniphonics and UNCA's Black Mountain College Legacy Fellow. "Our instruments are accessible to all, regardless of culture or biology. They're ideal conduits for shared experience between beings who might otherwise think they have little in common."

Leveraging the Bay Area's heritage of musical radicalism and new culture of innovation, Intergalactic Omniphonics will open its first showroom at Modernism Gallery in San Francisco, with a special launch event scheduled for the evening of Tuesday, July 24th. A wide range of instruments will be demonstrated and offered for sale.

The core idea behind the company's pioneering musical technology, according to Mr. Keats, is that his instruments don't privilege ordinary human hearing. The whole spectrum is supported – from infra- to ultrasound – as are other modes of musical expression that may be accessible to beings that haven't evolved ears. Stimuli include light waves and gamma rays from the electromagnetic spectrum, as well as exotic gravitational waves like those emitted by black holes.

"These instruments can actuate any phenomenon having frequency and amplitude – meaning every phenomenon capable of carrying a tune," explains Mr. Keats. "Our products aren't anthropocentric or even geocentric. They're universal, certifiably Copernican."

To test the instruments, and validate their compatibility, Mr. Keats has collaborated with UNCA music professors William Bares and Wayne Kirby to organize the world's first Copernican Orchestra. Although the twenty founding members are all Earthlings, the orchestra has provided a platform for experiments in universal improvisation as well as the development of a cosmic repertory.

"Composition has been challenging," admits Mr. Keats, who claims above-average experience in alien communication beginning with an intergalactic art exhibition he organized at the Magnes Museum in 2006. Composers must overcome human cultural, behavioral and cognitive biases, he explains. That can most easily be achieved by expressing meaning through cosmic constants such as universal laws of nature.

Thermodynamics has proven especially fertile, providing the framework for a new universal anthem that Intergalactic Omniphonics will distribute throughout the cosmos free-of-charge via a Creative Commons license. The anthem is based on the phenomenon of entropy. "The universe is gradually becoming less orderly, much as clothes become dirty and houses become messy," explains Mr. Keats. Life is an exception to this rule, at least temporarily: For as long as an organism lives, it draws energy from its environment, internally counteracting entropy by making its environment more entropic. Then it dies, and becomes part of the environment on which other life is nourished.

"Digestion and disintegration, that's what all life has in common," asserts Mr. Keats. "By conveying those entropic processes through cycles of musical order and disorderliness – performed on instruments for all sensory systems – the

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universal anthem expresses what we all share, regardless of nationality or planet. At least to me, that seems like a giant leap beyond the *Star Spangled Banner*."

Nevertheless, Mr. Keats emphasizes that the greatest potential for universal instruments is to be found outside of written scores and orchestral arrangements. "I'm most inspired by the jams I cannot plan, whether undertaken by galactic neighbors or humans on both sides of the US/Mexican border," he says. "What better way to improvise new societal relations than through the free play of music?"

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Intergalactic Omniphonics will hold a special launch event on Tuesday, July 24th from 5:30 to 8:00 at Modernism Gallery, 724 Ellis St., San Francisco, CA. Viewings will be available by appointment through August. Research and development has been generously funded by the University of North Carolina–Asheville. For more information, call 415/541-0461, email info@modernisminc.com, or visit www.modernisminc.com/artists/Jonathon_KEATS/

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Acclaimed as a "poet of ideas" by The New Yorker and a "multimedia philosopher-prophet" by The Atlantic, Jonathon Keats is an artist, writer and experimental philosopher. His conceptually-driven interdisciplinary projects explore all aspects of society through science and technology. In recent years, he has installed a camera with a thousand-year-long exposure time – documenting the long-term effects of climate change – at the Arizona State University Art Museum; launched a reciprocal biomimicry initiative – allowing non-human species to benefit from human technologies – at Bucknell University; opened a photosynthetic restaurant serving gourmet sunlight to plants at the Crocker Art Museum; and installed a cosmic welcome mat – greeting beings from throughout the universe – at the International Astronautical Congress. Exhibited internationally, Keats's projects have been documented by PBS, Reuters, and the BBC World Service, garnering favorable attention in periodicals ranging from Science to Flash Art to Slate to The Economist. He is the recipient of multiple Yaddo and MacDowell Fellowships, and has lectured at institutions including Stanford University, the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), which awarded him a 2015-16 Art + Technology Lab Grant. His latest book, You Belong to the Universe: Buckminster Fuller and the Future has recently been published by Oxford University Press, which also published his previous book, Forged: Why Fakes Are the Great Art of Our Age. He is the Black Mountain College Legacy Fellow at the University of North Carolina–Asheville and a Research Fellow at the Nevada Art Museum's Center for Art + Environment. He is represented by Modernism Gallery in San Francisco.

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