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# CLAIRE CHASE | Flute

Jacob Felix Heule | Live Sound

Saturday, April 18, 2026 | 7:30pm

Herbst Theatre

## Density 2036

**ANNEA LOCKWOOD/  
CLAIRE CHASE** Solo from *Elwha! (2025)* for flute and environmental sound

**SUSIE IBARRA** *Sunbird (2020)*  
(arr. Chase 2020)

**MARCOS BALTER** Solo Suite from *Pan (2018–19)*  
*Death of Pan*  
*Echo*  
*Sililoquy*

**PAULINE OLIVEROS** *Thirteen Changes (1986)*  
(arr. Chase) (with **Rand Steiger** | Signal Processing)

## INTERMISSION

**TERRY RILEY** *Pulsing Liftors* (with **Sarah Cahill** | Collaborator and Pianist)

**Solo Suite from The Holy Liftoff (2024)**  
(Arr. Samuel Clay Birmaher and Claire Chase)

**Claire Chase** is represented by Pink Noise Agency Brooklyn, NY [pinknoiseagency.com](http://pinknoiseagency.com)

Steinway Model D, Pro Piano, San Francisco.

For Tickets and More: [sfperformances.org](http://sfperformances.org) | 415.392.2545



## ARTISTS PROFILE

This is the San Francisco Performances debut of Claire Chase.

San Francisco Performances presents Sarah Cahill for the sixth time. She first appeared in November 2010.

**Claire Chase**, described by *The New York Times* recently as “the North Star of her instrument’s ever-expanding universe,” is a musician, interdisciplinary artist, curator, and teacher. Passionately dedicated to the creation of new ecosystems for the music of our time, Chase has given the world premieres of hundreds of new works by a new generation of artists. She was the first flutist to be awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2012, and in 2017 was the first flutist to be awarded the Avery Fisher Prize for Classical Music from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Chase served as the Richard and Barbara Debs Creative Chair at Carnegie Hall in the 2022–23 season and as the Music Director for the 2025 Ojai Music Festival.

Chase has performed as a soloist recently with the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Helsinki Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Kyoto Symphony, and London Philharmonia. Recent concerto projects include Kaija Saariaho’s “Aile du Songe” at Carnegie Hall and The Kennedy Center, and the world premiere of a new duo concerto by Dai Fujikura which Chase performed with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic at Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam in

January with the violinist Akiko Suwanai and on tour in Europe with the violinist Leila Josefowicz. In the 2022–23 season, Chase premiered a new duo concerto by Felipe Lara with the vocalist and bassist Felipe Lara with the vocalist and bassist Susanna Mälkki, which was named one of the Best Classical Music Performances of the Year by *The New York Times*.

In 2013, Chase launched the 24-year commissioning project *Density 2036*, described by *The New Yorker* as “a quarter-century journey with little precedent.” Now in its 12th year, *Density* reimagines the solo flute literature through commissions, performances, recordings, educational initiatives, and a community-focused approach to cultural production. In 2023, Chase performed all ten *Density* programs to date in a weeklong series of events co-produced by Carnegie Hall and The Kitchen. Central to the *Density* project is a commitment to supporting an international, multigenerational community of flutists who will take the *Density* repertoire in bold new interpretive directions. The *Density* Fellows program, launched in 2023 in celebration of the 10th anniversary, provides an international cohort of emerging flutists with the resources to make the *Density* repertoire their own. Chase is the artistic director of Density Arts, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of the flute in the 21st century.

As an undergraduate at Oberlin Conservatory, Chase co-founded the International Contemporary Ensemble, a collective of musicians, digital media artists, producers, and educators committed to creating collaborations built on equity and cultural

responsiveness. She served as the ensemble’s artistic director until 2017 and as an ensemble member on performance and educational projects on five continents, developing an artist-driven organizational model that resulted in the premieres of over 1,000 new works and earned the group multiple Chamber Music America/ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, the Trailblazer Award from the American Music Center, and the Ensemble of the Year Award from Musical America Worldwide.

A deeply committed educator, Chase is Professor of the Practice in the Department of Music at Harvard University, where she teaches courses on contemporary music, interdisciplinary collaboration, and cultural advocacy. Chase is also Creative Associate at The Juilliard School, where she mentors young artists and engages students in a range of interdisciplinary projects. Chase’s Debs Creative Chair residency at Carnegie Hall encompassed programming for all ages, including a “Day of Listening” for children and families inspired by the listening philosophies of Pauline Oliveros. Chase partnered with MacArthur Fellow Josh Kun to expand her Pauline Oliveros project as part of Getty’s PST ART x Science Collide festival in 2024–25.

Claire Chase’s extensive discography includes eleven solo albums of world premiere recordings and dozens of collaborative recordings with ensembles, composers, and sound artists from a wide range of musical genres. Chase grew up in Leucadia, California, with the childhood dream of becoming a professional baseball player before she discovered the flute.



**Sarah Cahill**, hailed as “a sterling pianist and an intrepid illuminator of the classical avant-garde” by *The New York Times*

and “a brilliant and charismatic advocate for modern and contemporary composers” by *Time Out New York*, has commissioned and premiered over seventy compositions for solo piano. Composers who have dedicated works to Cahill include John Adams, Terry Riley, Frederic Rzewski, Pauline Oliveros, Julia Wolfe, Roscoe Mitchell, Annea Lockwood, and Ingram Marshall. Keyboard Magazine writes, “Through her inspired interpretation of works across the 20th and 21st centuries, Cahill has been instrumental in bringing to life the music of many of our greatest living composers.” She was named a 2018 Champion of New Music, awarded by the American Composers Forum (ACF).

## PROGRAM NOTES

### ABOUT DENSITY 2036

Each year until 2036—which will mark the 100th anniversary of composer Edgard Varèse’s groundbreaking 1936 flute solo, *Density 21.5*—Claire Chase’s Density Arts is commissioning, performing, producing, and recording a new program of flute music. Each program expands the boundaries of the instrument. Integral to the project is a commitment to supporting an international, intergenerational community of flutists who will take the Density repertoire in adventurous new directions through the Density Fellows, Density Seeds, and Density Roots initiatives.

Density Arts is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the advancement of contemporary flute music in the 21st century. The organization’s central project is *Density 2036*, a 24-year initiative launched in 2013 to create a bold new repertoire for the flute, humankind’s oldest musical instrument.

### ABOUT THE WORKS

#### Solo Suite from *Pan*

*Density 2036: part v (2017–18)*

##### MARCOS BALTER

(B. 1974)

The goat-god Pan is one of only two Greek deities said to have been put to death. But how can an immortal figure die at all? Should we understand the death of a god not as a contradiction in terms, but rather as the end of an epoch, or a system of values? If

so, then what is it that dies with a figure like Pan—and is such a death a cause for grief, celebration, or something else entirely?

PAN, a 90-minute piece for solo flute, live electronics and mass community participation, is a meditation on ambiguity and the discomfort it brings. Pan is himself the consummate in-between. He is half man and half beast; as a demigod, his realm lies somewhere between heaven and earth. He is the symbol of fecundity and the creative urge; he is the weaver of melodies and the guardian of the wilderness. But he is also a cunning predator, whose lust and rapacity drives him to unspeakable deeds. This evening features solo arrangements of select movements from PAN.

—Program Note from the Artist

#### The Holy Liftoff

*Density 2036: part xi (2024)*

##### TERRY RILEY

(B. 1935)

The latest installation in the 24-year *Density 2036* project is *The Holy Liftoff*, a large-scale new work by legendary composer Terry Riley.

Riley began composing *The Holy Liftoff* in 2022 as an open score sketchbook brimming with colorful drawings that were intended to be played by Claire Chase (on multiple flutes) in collaboration with any number of additional musicians. Over the following two years, the sketches evolved into a multidimensional work that now combines extensive through-composed material—heard in this rendition as an eight-voice chorus of low and high flutes, seven of which are pre-recorded and one of which Chase plays live—as well as graphic notation, evocative artwork, and Riley’s signature open-form scoring that can be freely interpreted by the performers in variable durations and ensemble formations.

—Program Note from the Artist