

FRIDMAN GALLERY

Wednesday, February 3 at 7pm
(Streamed on loop for an additional 24 hours)
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PHILL NIBLOCK
THE MAGIC SUN (1966-68)

Composer, photographer, and filmmaker Phill Niblock's classic experimental underground film *The Magic Sun* features a sensational soundtrack by the legendary jazz musician Sun Ra and the members of his Solar Arkestra. Niblock used a very high contrast black-and-white film technique to shoot ultra-tight close-ups on the moving hands and mouths of the musicians.

This is the premiere screening of the newly restored film, which has been transferred from 16mm to HD video, color corrected by Adam Hogan and Laura Stayton, and sound revitalized by Dan Evans Farkas. The 16mm film was originally processed by J&D Film Labs, in NY.

DAVE SOLDIER
THE EIGHTH HOUR OF AMDUAT (2017-20)
AN OPERA BASED ON THE OLDEST SURVIVING MUSICAL SCORE

Marshall Allen, the leader of the Sun Ra Arkestra, is featured in the part of the Egyptian god Sun Ra, in Dave Soldier's new classical/jazz/electronic opera based on the oldest musical score known, the *Eighth hour of the Book of the Amduat*. In this version from 1425 BC, the sounds and music are clearly specified during Sun Ra's nightly travels on the underworld river to age, die, and be reborn to rise again every morning. The ancient hieroglyphs are translated to Italian by Egyptologist Rita Lucarrelli (professor at UC Berkeley) and the parts of the other gods and demons are sung by mezzo soprano (Sahoko Sato Timpone from the Metropolitan Opera) and a choir and by additional improvisers (Dan Blacksborg, Nick Millevoi, Michael Winograd, Rebecca Cherry) with a classical orchestra.

In this video premiere of the opera, Dave Soldier has animated the ancient book from 3500 years ago. Marshall Allen plays the alto saxophone and EWI electronic wind instrument as Sun Ra, who doesn't speak in the book but calls the other gods and demons, and this 96 year old master musician, performing in a version of the world's oldest musical text, sounds more Futuristic than anyone else ever has.

The Book of the Amduat is painted on walls in the tombs of the Valley of the Kings and many papyri, using the version in Tuthmose III's tomb, who ruled Egypt from 1485-1431 BC. He is widely thought to be the Pharaoh of Exodus: if it wasn't him, it was a close relative. He co-ruled at first with the female Pharaoh, Hatsepsut, and was great grandfather to Akhenaten. He built the obelisks known as Cleopatra's Needle, one of which is on the Thames in London, and the other is near East 81st street in Central Park in New York City.

Each morning, Sun Ra emerges from a hole in the east and sails on a river through our sky. After he descends he continues from west to east on the river through the underworld, the Amudat, to reemerge in the morning. Each night he dies, but is reborn in the 6th night hour when he unites with Osiris and defeats the serpent, Apep.

The piece takes place during the 8th hour of the night, Mistress of deep night, in the city of the 8th hour, Sarcophagus of her gods. Sun Ra and his companions on the boat are being hauled by a choir on the underworld river. During the hour they are clothed and encounter other gods who live in ten caverns along the shore, along with living knives who defeat their enemies and four sacred rams. By 'earliest sound score', Dave Soldier means that the specific sounds from each group of gods in each cavern of the city are described quite literally during the trip. The piece is based in part on Colleen Manassa's article *Sounds of the Netherworld*, and the translations of the arias to Italian and insights are from Rita Lucarelli.

Musicians:

Rita Lucarelli, Egyptology and translation of hieroglyphs to Italian, Sahoko Sato Timpone, Mistress of the Boat, Mezzosoprano

Marshall Allen, Sun Ra, saxophone & electronic valve instrument (EVI), Rebecca Cherry, Horus of Fragrance, violin, Dan Blacksberg, Wepwawet, trombone

Nick Millevoi, Sia, guitar, Michael Winograd, Nehes, C clarinet, Enrique Rivera-Matos, Hu, tuba, Adam Vidiksis, Conductor, Akhmed Manedov, violin

Juana Pinilla Paez, violin, Olivia Gusmano, viola, Carolina Diazgronados, cello, Dani Bash, harp, Anthony di Bartolo, percussion

Thomas Kolakowski, percussion, Dave Soldier, water bowls, electronics

Choir: Chace Simmonds-Frith, Natasha Thweatt, Sophie Laruelle, Xiaoming Tian, Eugene Sirotkine, Alicia Waller, Melinda Learnard, Sahoko Sato Timpone

Dave Soldier

Composer Dave Soldier's projects include the Thai Elephant Orchestra consisting of 14 elephants in northern Thailand, the cult Delta punk band the Kropotkins, The People's Choice (The World's Most Wanted and Unwanted Music), the classic "punk classical" Soldier String Quartet, the Brainwave Music Project and coaching children to compose their own music in Harlem, Brooklyn, and Guatemala. Soldier performs as a multi-instrumentalist with the William Hooker Trio, and has performed and recorded with Leroy Jenkins, Henry Threadgill, Sabir Mateen, Roy Campbell, Butch Morris, Jason Hwang, Billy Bang, and Amina Claudine Myers. He has performed as violinist, guitarist, and composer/arranger with Bo Diddley, John Cale, Kurt Vonnegut, and many others, appearing on over 100 CDs, including 20 featuring his own compositions for classical and jazz musicians.

During the day, Dave Soldier is neuroscientist Dave Sulzer at Columbia University, where he is Professor of Psychiatry, Neurology, and Pharmacology. In March, 2021, Columbia University Press will publish his new book, entitled "Music, Math and Mind. He has just released a new CD with Jonathan Kane, co-founder of Swans and long-time drummer with LaMonte Young, "February Meets Soldier String Quartet". His Soldier String Quartet has recorded an entire album of works by Phill Niblock "Music by Phill Niblock" in 1993.