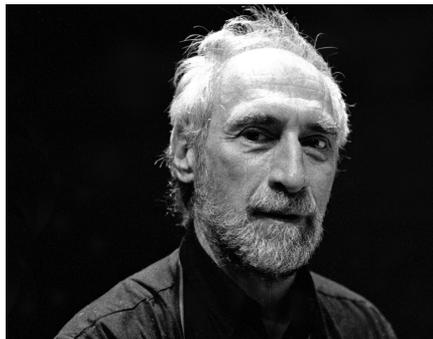


## PROGRAM NOTES



### ***Sometimes***

FREDERIC RZEWSKI

*b. April 13, 1938, Westfield, MA*

### **Premiere**

October 29, 2015 in Durham, NC

*Sometimes* was commissioned by Duke Performances from master composer Frederic Rzewski, a musician nominated by Imani Winds for his prodigious compositional acumen and his profound social consciousness. The work is based on the traditional African-American spiritual *Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child*, specifically the version sung by the great singer and activist Paul Roberson, which the composer remembers clearly from his childhood. The piece essentially deconstructs the spiritual and has improvisatory aspects that result in a different performance each time. *Sometimes* begins with this quote from John Hope Franklin's autobiography, *Mirror to America*, read over solo bassoon:

*"We need a new American revolution that will create a new ideology of comradeship in the great enterprise of building a society in which every man, woman and child can face tomorrow unencumbered by the burdens of the past or the prejudices of the present. This calls for a revolution in the hearts and souls of every American. This is what the first American revolution did not have. This is what the new American revolution must have."*



### ***Bruits***

VIJAY IYER

*b. October 26, 1971, Albany, NY*

### **Premiere**

April 9, 2014, at La Musica International Chamber Music Festival, Sarasota, FL

"Bruits" means "noises," and it is the name given to the turbulent noises made by blood moving through obstructed arteries, heard through a stethoscope; when

detected, they indicate that a body is at risk.

For this Greenfield Prize commission, I initially wanted to pay tribute to the beautiful, historic Gulf Coast region. But like many Americans, I am also very concerned about the conditions that people of color face in the state of Florida and nationwide — from inequality to disenfranchisement to unpunished violence. *Bruits* attempts to speak at once about nature and community, listening for parallel dynamics in those places.

In my visits to the Hermitage I found myself facing this profound dichotomy. On the one hand, I felt the majesty of the place, its climate, landscapes, wildlife and the good people who tend to it; and on the other hand, I detected an undeniable sense of societal injustice, unrest, and urgency — the underlying noises indicating a fundamental instability.

Researchers have learned quite a lot about the controversial “castle doctrine”/”stand your ground”/”shoot first” laws since they were enacted over the last decade. From the data, we know that far from deterring crime, these laws lead to a statistically significant 8 percent net increase in the number of reported murders and non-negligent manslaughters.<sup>[1]</sup> We know that the killings of black people by whites are generally more likely to be considered justified than the killings of white people by blacks. But we also know that whites who kill blacks in Stand Your Ground states are far more likely to be found justified in their killings. In non-Stand Your Ground states, whites are 250 percent more likely to be found justified in killing a black person than a white person who kills another white person; in Stand Your Ground states, that number jumps to 354 percent.<sup>[2]</sup>

The state of Florida has been an infamous testing ground for the “Shoot First” law, which now appear in nearly half of the states in the union. Florida could also lead the nation by repealing the law. *Bruits* represents my wish to see that happen.

*Bruits* is written for Imani Winds, a stellar ensemble whom I have known well for fifteen years, along with the brilliant pianist Cory Smythe. It was commissioned by The Greenfield Prize at the Hermitage Artist Retreat, Englewood, Florida in 2012, and premiered at La Musica International Chamber Music Festival in Sarasota on April 4, 2014. I am grateful to all the musicians for their hard work, and to my kind hosts at the Hermitage for lavishing me with time and space needed to make this and other work.

And most of all, thank you for listening.

–Vijay Iyer

[1] Cheng, C. & Hoekstra, M. 2012. Does Strengthening Self-Defense Law Deter Crime or Escalate Violence? Evidence from Expansions to Castle Doctrine. *Journal of Human Resources* 2013, 48 (3): 821-854 [http://econweb.tamu.edu/mhoekstra/castle\\_doctrine.pdf](http://econweb.tamu.edu/mhoekstra/castle_doctrine.pdf)

[2] Roman, John. 2013. Race, Justifiable Homicide and Stand Your Ground Laws: Analysis of FBI Supplementary Homicide Data. The Urban Institute. <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412873-stand-your-ground.pdf>



## **2.6 Pentadactyl**

HENRY THREADGILL

*b. February 15, 1944, Chicago, IL*

**World premiere**

Henry Threadgill is a multi-instrumentalist and composer based in New York. Born in Chicago in 1944, Threadgill was exposed to the sounds of jazz and avant-classical music in his teens, was an early member of Muhal Richard Abrams' Experimental Band, which later expanded to become the AACM. Threadgill's extensive influence on jazz and improvised music over the course of his 40-year career has earned him a 2003 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2008 United States Artist Fellowship, a 2016 Doris Duke Artist Award, and a Copland House Residency Award. Threadgill won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for his work *In For a Penny, In For a Pound*, making him one of only three jazz artists honored with this distinction.