

Scott Wollschleger  
*Soft Aberration*

## *Soft Aberration*

### *Brontal Symmetry* [2015]

**TRACK 1** 14:27

Longleash

Pala García, *violin* John Popham, *cello* Renate Rohlfing, *piano*

### *Soft Aberration* [2013]

**TRACK 2** 13:32

Anne Lanzilotti, *viola* Karl Larson, *piano*

### *Bring Something Incomprehensible into This World* [2015]

**TRACK 3 PART I** 6:39

**TRACK 5 PART II** 3:25

**TRACK 8 PART III** 1:43

Andy Kozar, *trumpet* Corrine Byrne, *soprano*

### *America* [2013]

**TRACK 4** 8:00

John Popham, *cello*

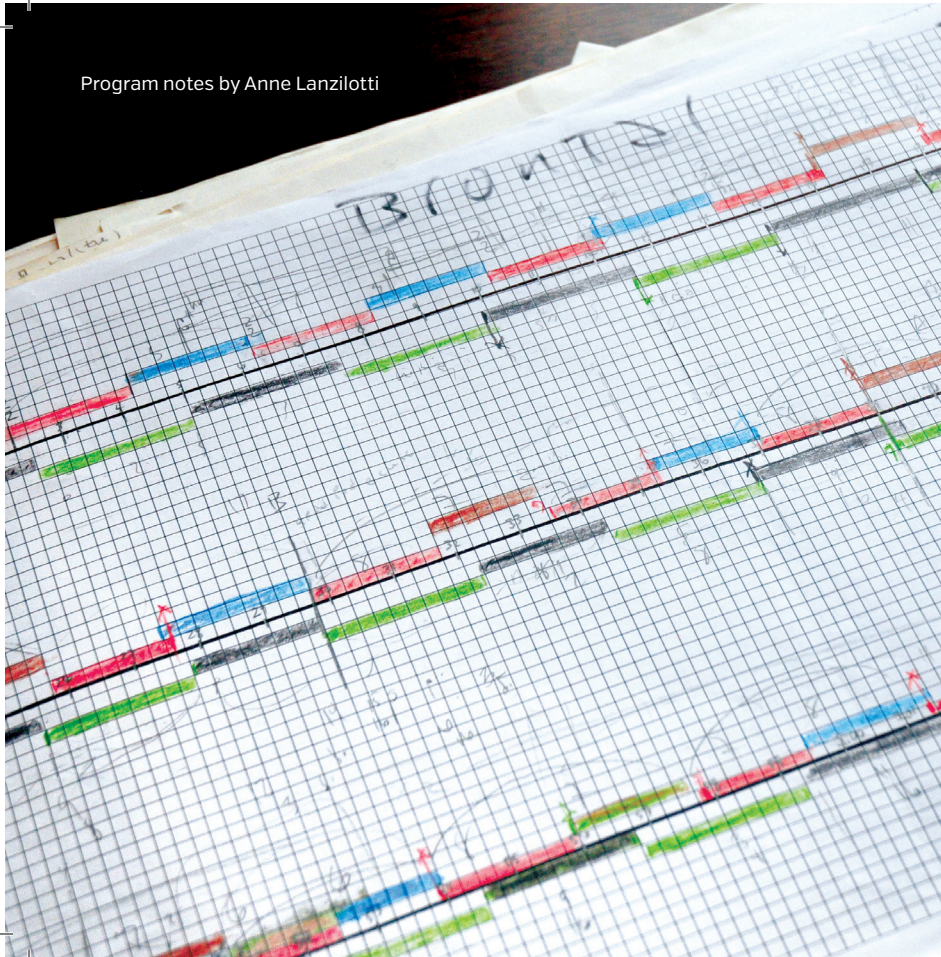
### *White Wall* [2013]

**TRACK 6 PART I** 11:56

**TRACK 7 PART II** 7:31

Mivos Quartet

Olivia De Prato, *violin* Josh Modney, *violin* Victor Lowrie, *viola* Mariel Roberts, *cello*



## *Brontal Symmetry*

Sorting through a box of his old manuscripts, Scott picked up a stack of grid paper covered in blocks of black, red, blue, and green drawn in colored pencil. “This is another Brontal score,” he said, flipping through the pages. *Brontal Symmetry* is comprised of a series of “discarded scraps” of music from other pieces, here introduced in a sort of memory game. Each sound object is revealed and then slowly taken away while new ideas are introduced. What is left from these “scraps” is a series of sensations—objects without the context of their original meaning.

“Brontal” is a made-up word that longtime collaborator Kevin Sims coined after making a series of pencil drawings on orange paper. The word now embodies Wollschleger’s aesthetic: the idea that we can create art that is very basic and human by discovering the sensation of an object. In doing this, we are making something unfamiliar very immediate. This process of discovery can be very focused and also, at times, very funny.

The humor of curiosity is very apparent in *Brontal Symmetry*. In recent personal correspondence with Pala Garcia of Longleash [for whom the work was written], she said:

I think the funniest aspect of Scott’s piece is the cartoonish aesthetic—even in the most chaotic, violent parts, it still only feels like cartoon violence—nothing irreversibly fatal, just punch-drunk swirling stars. The last piano flourish reminds me of cartoon heroics—like when classical masterworks are used in cartoons for melodramatic effect. The opening sections have their own kind of humor, more a caricature of humdrum monotony—perhaps the kind of New York City monotony that’s never actually that ordinary or boring, just predictably weird.



## Soft Aberration

It's very difficult for me to write about this piece because I'm so close to it: *Soft Aberration* was written for Karl Larson and me. In my interpretation of the piece as a performer, the piano sets out its idea of how things are structured by itself—the entire first section is void of the other instrumentalist. When the viola enters, it is holding onto the memory of a melody that used to be beautiful, now so far beyond even being a melody that it is just shapes of white noise. Perhaps we never actually hear the original, only an idealistic version in harmonics. At the center of the piece, the hearts of the two instruments are exposed, but ultimately this is not a place we can stay.

This interpretation is not something any of us had discussed explicitly, so I was surprised that Scott's musical intention was so clear when I read his final program note for the piece:

*Soft Aberration* is a piece about imitation, but rather than sharing identical musical material I imagined each instrument as a damaged reflective surface which projects a kind of "broken echo" between the two instruments. In some sense the piano wants to "see itself" in the viola's music and the viola wants the same from the piano. The two struggle with this throughout the piece and at various times they find a way to "see" each other.

In a recent conversation, Scott elaborated on the poetics of white noise as used in this work:

Your part in *Soft Aberration* is something that's gone. But also, I thought of it as a mirroring thing where you're not able to see each other because this is true of life—everyone, no matter how close you are—there's a part of you that they'll never know and you'll never know them . . . This is the mystery of life in a way, to never fully be able to express yourself to someone. We're always missing each other a little bit.



## *Bring Something Incomprehensible into This World*

Coming out of the deterioration of musical dialogue that ends *Soft Aberration*, *Bring Something Incomprehensible into This World* explores the sound of language itself. In a recent conversation discussing these two works, Wollschleger elaborated:

I think there's a semiology of duet—how do you treat two people or two things that are going to have a discursive interaction?

The text, [originally: “Bring something incomprehensible into the world!”] is from the philosopher Gilles Deleuze in reference to Heinrich Von Kleist. I think of the title as a very affirmative statement of what I personally think the goal of art should be: rendering something into existence that is inconceivable before it happens. That to me is the most powerful thing I can imagine doing with my energy.

While the work was originally conceived as a whole, it has been split into three sections for this album. These three parts link the other works together in an arc, framing them and showing their relationships. In Part I of *Bring Something Incomprehensible into This World*, Wollschleger says:

The trumpet and voice are in a playful dialogue. The text is presented in fragments. The fragments are made of single words or just syllabic sounds. I found breaking the text up into smaller sounding parts allowed me greater flexibility when writing the piece and ultimately allowed for a more free-spirited approach. The arrangement of the vocal sounds sometimes implies new words and phrases.

Now framing different works on the album, each section of the piece takes on a different

exploration of sound. We start hearing how little melodic fragments of this piece are hiding in other works.

Often the trumpet and the voice blend together to create what I call a “dirty unison.” I imagined the sounds of the words themselves being “smeared” by the trumpet’s sounds. I think the interaction between the voice and the trumpet implies a kind a hybrid instrument or a mutant offspring that is the combination of the trumpet and the human voice.

Rather than pulling the words apart more, this version in three parts becomes the mantra or philosophical goal of the album: *Bring Something Incomprehensible Into This World*.

In personal correspondence, Wollschleger once said of this process:

There are not going to be concrete solutions anytime soon but there are going to be concrete experiments that are pushing to articulate a new version of the real. You’re doing this in all its unclear and painful glory . . . Just remember you’re not crazy. You’re actually creating a new way of thinking.



## America

I happened to see Glenn Ligon's *Double America 2* [2014] at The Broad in Los Angeles when I was working on this piece. I remember waiting while a group of college students took selfies in front of it so that I could take a video with my phone to send to Scott. Ligon's work, for neon and paint, is the word AMERICA in large capital letters inverted under itself. The lower AMERICA in the sculpture flickers slightly, unstable – a phenomenon that we are so used to it seems unintentional. And yet, is this *Double America* a reflection of itself? Ligon's work is informed by his experience as an African American in the United States—his piece seeks to expose the idea of multiplicity in America, and in the self.

While these two works are seemingly unrelated, the idea of trying to essentialize experience made me view my interpretation of Wollschleger's *America* differently.

Is *America* a set of clear identities struggling against each other?

Is *America* a complex texture that exposes multiplicity?

Is *America* endless lines of strip malls that blur into a texture of gray in a car trip across the country? A series of flickering gas station signs?

Is *America* an unraveling hopefulness that is only revealed for a moment?

Perhaps once we identify something we oversimplify it. Wollschleger's *America* resists as it rotates through glitchy, fragile material.

## White Wall

"I think there's a kind of emptied quality to the string quartet, and those pieces I wrote at that time." Scott trails off slightly, then continues, "I think the white noise signified that sort of complete emptiness that's at the very end of something. But to have that be the actual starting spot was the idea." We're sitting in my living room on what is probably the windiest day in winter this season. The old windows in my apartment aren't sealed well, and the entire recorded interview is accompanied by a pervasive cold wind. Every time Scott pauses as he's thinking about the white noise sounds, it seems as though the wind picks up, as though it can tell that we're talking about it. Wollschleger continued:

*[White Wall]* definitely represented a break in my own work, or in myself, or in my approach to art, where I wanted to see how you could start from nothing, and pull from within itself something . . . . If you were to drain music from itself, what would be left over?

The beginning of the piece is almost a sound installation. We hear the "breathing" of the four instruments as they are activated by white noise. The breathing turns into humming, slowly unearthing a melody. As this "song" emerges from the white noise, it begins to dance around the fluttering creatures that surround it. Wollschleger elaborated:

Again, this notion of unfolding from within itself was the goal—utopian chimera, Adorno's dream. But I think ending it with a dance was my way of saying this isn't going to happen. . . . That's why I think I had to add that second movement.

Yet, the playful dance of the second movement also disintegrates. This pervasive feeling of being drained cannot be shaken. Wollschleger added:

I always think of the white noise as the bleached out remains of a human. Which I think is a kind of beautiful idea: when nothing is left, that's all that's left, that white noise. . . . And after history, and after Brahms, and after all our feelings, what would there be? The white noise points to that language which might be left for us.

All music composed by Scott Wollschleger, published by Project Schott New York (BMI).

The music on track 2 is published under the title, *Soft Aberration no. 2*. Tracks 3, 5, 8 are published together as a single continuous composition without movement breaks. Tracks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 were recorded between October 2014 - November 2016 at Oktaven Audio, Yonkers, NY. Tracks 6 and 7 were recorded May 12 at Sear Sound, New York, NY.

### RECORDING ENGINEER

Ryan Streber

### EDITING, MIXING, MASTERING

Ryan Streber, Hans Hsu, Anne Lanzilotti, and Scott Wollschleger

### PRODUCED BY

Anne Lanzilotti, Scott Wollschleger

### EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Anne Lanzilotti

### ALBUM DESIGN

Traci Larson

### PAINTING

*May I have this dense*, by Lisa Abbot-Canfield used with permission from the artist.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Anne Lanzilotti, used with permission.

This album was made possible with support from the Alice M. Ditson Fund. New Focus Recordings FCR 182



## Longleash

piano trio

Longleash (Pala Garcia, John Popham, Renate Rohlfing) is a group with a traditional instrumentation and a progressive identity. Inspired by music with unusual sonic beauty, an inventive streak, and a truthful cultural voice, Longleash extends a love of classical chamber musicianship to the interpretation of contemporary music, crafting performances that are both dynamic and thoughtfully refined. An “expert young trio” praised for its “subtle and meticulous musicianship” (*Strad Magazine*) and its “technical expertise and expressive innovation” (*Feast of Music*), Longleash has quickly earned a reputation in the US and abroad for innovative programming, artistic excellence, and new music advocacy.

Longleash balances a full performing schedule with commissioning and recording projects and the trio’s own summer festival, The Loretto Project (KY). Performance highlights include concerts at Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC), the Ecstatic Music Festival (NY), the Green Music Center (CA), National Sawdust (NY), Scandinavia House (NY), Trondheim International Chamber Music Festival (Norway), and the University of Louisville. Longleash has conducted lectures and workshops at New York University, Manhattan School of Music, University of Nebraska, Ohio University, and Hunter College. Longleash takes its name from Operation Long Leash, a recently declassified CIA operation designed to disseminate the work of American avant-garde artists throughout Europe during the Cold War.

[www.longleashtrio.com](http://www.longleashtrio.com) | [www.thelorettoproject.com](http://www.thelorettoproject.com)

## Mivos Quartet

string quartet

The Mivos Quartet, “one of America’s most daring and ferocious new-music ensembles” (*The Chicago Reader*), is devoted to performing the works of contemporary composers, presenting new music to diverse audiences. Since the quartet’s beginnings in 2008 they have performed works by emerging and established international composers who represent varied aesthetics of contemporary composition. Mivos is invested in commissioning and premiering new music for string quartet, particularly in a context of close collaboration with composers over extended time-periods. Recent collaborations include works with Mark Barden (Wien Modern Commission), Dan Blake (Jerome Commission), Richard Carrick (Fromm Commission), Patrick Higgins (ZS), Sam Pluta (Lucerne Festival Commission), Kate Soper, Saul Williams, Scott Wollschleger, and Eric Wubbels (CMA commission). Mivos is committed to working with guest artists, exploring multi-media projects involving live video and electronics, creating original compositions and arrangements for the quartet, and performing improvised music. The quartet has appeared on concert series including Wien Modern (Austria), Transart (Italy), Music at the Phillips (Washington, DC), Lucerne Festival (Switzerland), HellHOT! New Music Festival (Hong Kong), Festival International Chihuahua (México), Edgefest (Ann Arbor, MI), Asphalt Festival (Germany), and Aldeburgh Music (UK).

[www.mivosquartet.com](http://www.mivosquartet.com)

## Corrine Byrne

soprano

Hailed for her “beautiful vocal timbre,” soprano Corrine Byrne has quickly become a celebrated singer and interpreter of repertoire from the Medieval to the Baroque era, and music by today’s most daring contemporary composers. Recent roles include Anna I (*Die Todsünden*), Lady Madeline (*The Fall of The House of Usher* by Felix Jarrar), Doctor (*The Scarlet Professor* by Eric Sawyer), Cathy (*The Last Five Years*), Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*) and Anima (*Ordo Virtutum*). Byrne has made appearances with The Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra, REBEL Baroque Ensemble, One World Symphony, Manhattan School of Music Symphony Orchestra, Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra, Amherst Symphony, Lorelei Ensemble, the Carnegie Hall Chamber Chorus, and is a co-founder of Ensemble Musica Humana. Byrne was a finalist for the 2012 Career Bridges Grant Awards, the 2013 Classical Singer Magazine Competition, the 2015 Handel Aria Competition, and a semi-finalist in the 2016 New York Oratorio Society Solo Competition. She holds a B.M. from UMass Amherst, an M.M. from Manhattan School of Music, and a D.M.A. from Stony Brook University.

[www.corrinebyrne.com](http://www.corrinebyrne.com)

## Andy Kozar

Trumpet

A native of Pittsburgh, Andy Kozar is a New York City based trumpeter, improviser, composer and educator that has been called a “star soloist” (*TimeOutNY*) and has been said to be “agile as he navigated leaps and slurs with grace . . . he shifted between lyricism and aggression deftly” (*International Trumpet Guild Journal*). A strong advocate of contemporary music, he is a founding member of the contemporary music quartet loadbang which has been called “inventive” (*New York Times*), “cultivated” (*The New Yorker*), and “a formidable new-music force” (*TimeOutNY*). With loadbang, his playing has been said to be “polished and dynamic, with very impressive playing” (*the Baltimore Sun*), and that he “coaxed the ethereal and the gritty from [his] muted instrument . . . and revealed a facility for shaping notes and color” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*). He is also a member of TILT Brass and has performed with new music ensembles including Argento Chamber Ensemble, Talea Ensemble, Ensemble Signal, Ensemble ACJW, Wet Ink, and Mark Gould’s Pink Baby Monster. He has performed alongside artists such as Dave Douglas, Pablo Heras Casado, James Thompson, Mark Gould, and Brad Lubman, in addition to working closely with numerous leading composers including Helmut Lachenmann, Augusta Read Thomas, and Pulitzer Prize-winning composers David Lang and Charles Wuorinen.

[www.andykozar.com](http://www.andykozar.com)



## John Popham

cello

Cellist John Popham is an active chamber musician and teacher. His playing has been described as “brilliant” and “virtuosic” (*Kronen Zeitung*), “warm but variegated”, and “finely polished” (*The New York Times*). Currently a member of the piano trio Longleash and the Either/Or Ensemble, he has performed internationally with such ensembles as Klangforum Wien, Argento Chamber Ensemble, and the Talea Ensemble. The recipient of numerous awards and scholarships, including a Fulbright Fellowship and the Manhattan School of Music Full Scholarship, Mr. Popham holds a B.M. and M.M. from the Manhattan School of Music. He has recorded for Tzadik, Carrier, New Focus, Albany, and New World records.

[www.johnpatrickpopham.com](http://www.johnpatrickpopham.com)

## Karl Larson

piano

Brooklyn based pianist Karl Larson, praised for his “thoughtful” and “fervent” performances by *The New York Times*, is a sought after musician dedicated to the performance and cultivation of contemporary music. Larson has premiered works by notable composers including David Lang, Chris Cerrone, Scott Wollschleger, and David Rakowski. Larson has worked with many notable musicians and ensembles in his field and continues to seek out new collaborations and innovative projects. Recent collaborations include his work with Bearthoven, whose debut record *Trios* was released on Cantaloupe Music in May 2017, and Ashley Bathgate, with whom he released *Restless*, a record of Ken Thomson’s compositions, in October 2016.

Larson is originally from McFarland, WI, and he holds degrees from Luther College and Bowling Green State University, where his primary teachers were John Strauss and Laura Melton.

[www.karllarsonpiano.com](http://www.karllarsonpiano.com)

## Anne Lanzilotti

viola + executive producer

A fierce advocate of contemporary music, Anne Lanzilotti has distinguished herself premiering works by and collaborating with composers of her generation. An active composer-performer, Lanzilotti has been a guest artist with Alarm Will Sound, Ensemble Échappé, and the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). Lanzilotti teaches at University of Northern Colorado School of Music. As a scholar, she specializes in the music of Andrew Norman: her dissertation is an analysis of Norman’s *The Companion Guide to Rome*, showing the influence of architecture and visual art on the work. As an extension of that research, she created *Shaken Not Stuttered*, a free online resource that demonstrates extended techniques for strings used in Norman’s orchestral and chamber works. Lanzilotti has also published articles in *Music & Literature* and *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. A native of Hawai’i, she is a co-founder and Artistic Consultant for Kalikolehua – El Sistema Hawai’i, a free orchestra program for underserved youth.

[www.annelanzilotti.com](http://www.annelanzilotti.com)

Thank you my wife and love Emily Bookwalter for your love, wisdom, and unwavering support of my work. Our bond has given me the strength to make all this possible. Thank you Anne Lanzilotti for your incredible musicianship, friendship, and your dedication to my music and thank you for being the guiding hand (and ears) on this project. Thank you Ryan Streber for your expertise. Thank you Yegor Shevtsov for spurring me to create this album and thank you Dan Lippel and New Focus for your vision and support of my work. And to my musicians; Karl Larson, John Popham, Pala Garcia, Renate Rohlfling, Andy Kozar, Corrine Byrne, Olivia De Prato, Josh Modney, Victor Lowrie, Mariel Roberts, thank you for your faith and beautiful musicianship which has brought my musical worlds into the real.



## Scott Wollschleger

composer

Scott Wollschleger (b.1980, Erie, PA) is a Brooklyn-based composer of solo, chamber, and dramatic music. His distinct musical language explores themes of art in dystopia, the conceptualization of silence, synesthesia, and creative repetition in form.

Wollschleger's music has been described as "evocative" and "kaleidoscopic" (*The New York Times*) and Alex Ross recently noted that Wollschleger "has become a formidable, individual presence" (*The Rest Is Noise*). Much of his music features a sense of "timeless lyricism", a quality that influential avant-garde jazz pianist and blogger Ethan Iverson described as "the highlight of the disc" in his enthusiastic review of Wollschleger's *Brontal No. 3* on Red Light New Music's debut album *Barbary Coast*, a 2014 New Focus Records release.

Wollschleger's concert works have been performed across the US and the world, including the International Music Institute at Darmstadt, the Festival of New American Music in Sacramento, the Bang on a Can Festival at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, and the MATA Festival Interval Series.

Following lightly in the footsteps of the New York School, Wollschleger received his Masters of Music in composition from Manhattan School of Music. Wollschleger's music has been supported by grants and awards from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Yvar Mikhashoff Trust for New Music, BMI, New Music USA, and the Society for New Music. His music is published by Project Schott New York.

[www.scottwollschleger.com](http://www.scottwollschleger.com)

