

BRECK CREATE

PRESS RELEASE

ANNOUNCING

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Breckenridge International Festival of Arts • Aug 11 – 20

Virtuosic Percussionist Steven Schick

Returns to BIFA 2023

Steven Schick displays his virtuosic percussion skills with *Schick Machine* and serves as writer, narrator and conductor of *Exuberant Moderns: A Gallery Guide to the Modern Concert Stage*; *Exuberant Moderns* is produced in partnership with the National Repertory Orchestra.

More Information about [Schick Machine](#) • More information about [Exuberant Moderns](#)

Breckenridge, CO - Virtuosic percussionist, conductor and author Steven Schick returns to the 2023 Breckenridge International Festival of Arts (BIFA) in two capacities: as the protagonist in the musical theater piece entitled *Schick Machine* and as writer, narrator and conductor of *Exuberant Moderns: A Gallery Guide to the Modern Concert Stage*, which is produced in partnership with the National Repertory Orchestra (NRO).

“I am very much looking forward to being back in Breckenridge,” Schick says. “Both (of these pieces) are inventions and meditations, energetic and reflective. All at the same time. *Schick Machine* is an amazing percussion piece featuring hundreds of instruments played by one person. It’s part music, part theater and part circus. It will be super entertaining for all ages. *Exuberant Moderns* is a look at the passions and energies of 20th and 21st century music.”

Heralded as “the philosopher king of percussion” by composer Michael Gordon in a 2022 *New York Times* [article](#), Schick made his first appearance at BIFA in 2016 with a series of creative pairings including “Yoga with the Birds,” an outdoor workshop that employed the act of yoga to prepare the mind and body for deep listening environmental composer John Luther Adams’ *Songbird Songs*. The program’s popularity inspired BIFA’s current Acoustic Flow series, which combines a daily 60-minute, outdoor, morning yoga class with music. Schick’s dedication to inspired collaborations that surprise and delight audiences in Breckenridge shows no sign of stopping after five seasons, and he relishes the varied and unique venues Breckenridge can offer. It’s just as likely to find him at work in the Riverwalk Center as it is performing along the Blue River or inside the intimate historic cabins and structures throughout the Arts District Campus.

150 W ADAMS AVENUE • PO BOX 4269 • BRECKENRIDGE CO 80424 • BRECKCREATE.ORG

“As producers of BIFA, we cherish our relationship with Steven Schick,” says Tamara Nuzzaci Park, president and CEO of Breck Create. “He is a master of developing programs that illuminate the spirit of Breckenridge and today’s social issues through meaningful partnerships with artists and our audiences. It’s a rare treat to see Steve perform anywhere in the world, but especially here in our intimate mountain community.”

About *Schick Machine*: In *Schick Machine*, Schick plays a musician/percussionist who, because of his obsessive focus on sound, endlessly collects the many objects and instruments that carry the vivid memories of his lifetime of sonic experiences. He has become weighed down by these objects and memories and, now facing eviction from his warehouse that is being razed in the name of progress, he must choose just a few objects, sounds and memories to take with him, all the while exploring a visually compelling world of mechanical devices, invented instruments and seemingly infinite sonic possibilities.

Memories such as a summer storm's distant thunder and the late-night sound of his mother's typewriter compel him to attempt the creation of the Schick Machine, a wondrous mechanical device that consumes his every waking and dreaming moment. The Schick Machine comes to life on stage in the form of a giant motorized hurdy gurdy, a deconstructed pipe organ and an array of spinning and thrashing metal machines. These devices and more fill the workshop of the possibly mad and possibly genius inventor as he nears the completion of his giant instrument that he believes can reconcile the past and the future.

Collaboratively created by a multi-disciplinary team including composer/instrument builder Paul Dresher, writer/director Rinde Eckert, percussionist/performer Steven Schick, lighting and visual designer Tom Ontiveros, instrument inventor/educator Daniel Schmidt and mechanical sound artist Matt Heckert, *Schick Machine* features percussionist Schick exploring a visually compelling world of mechanical devices, invented instruments and seemingly infinite sonic possibilities. He occupies a stage filled with large scale invented instruments, drawing the audience into a magical place filled with creative potential. The audience is driven to relinquish its expectations about what an instrument should look like, how it should be played, and what sounds it can make, and is enticed into a sonorous world of continual aural and visual surprises. *Schick Machine* has been created specifically to appeal to a broad range of audiences including families, youth and students and senior citizens.

Performances of *Schick Machine* will take place on Wednesday, August 16th at 11 a.m. and at 7:30 p.m. at the Riverwalk Center, with the earlier performance geared toward families and free with registration. This special 50-minute presentation provides young people the opportunity to see, hear, touch and literally enter the magical world of the Schick Machine. The later performance is being offered as “pay what you can.” Registration, tickets

and more information for both performances can be found at breckcreate.org. *Schick Machine* has been generously underwritten by Paul Finkel and Barbara Strauss. Additionally, children ages five to 10 can register to participate in the a.m. [BIFA Art Camp](#) where campers will create personalized percussion instruments and then attend the *Schick Machine* family concert. NRO member Dan Howard will lead the campers in instrument creation and teach them how to create basic rhythmic sounds.

About *Exuberant Moderns*: Classical and orchestral concerts at the Riverwalk Center have been a source of pride for the Breckenridge community for more than four decades and continue to shape an authentic Breckenridge experience. The NRO has called Breckenridge home since 1993 and has partnered with Breck Create since the arts organization began operating in 2014. It has long been the goal of both organizations to bring residents and visitors the highest quality artists and performances the world has to offer, while cultivating emerging talent and providing a place for expression in the heart of Breckenridge.

Breck Create and the NRO continue their BIFA partnership with *Exuberant Moderns*. Select NRO fellows extend their residency in Breckenridge for this performance at the Riverwalk Center, which features a program of contemporary classical chamber music paired with artwork by modern masters and narration by Schick.

“The NRO breaks barriers between education, performance, and our community to develop 21st century musicians. Partnering on programs like *Exuberant Moderns* does exactly that by curating a meaningful performance at the intersection of different forms of art,” says Dan Howard, Director of Operations & Education for the NRO.

Exuberant Moderns is a program for mixed small instrumental ensembles in five “galleries” that combine the fervent optimism of composers and painters as they navigated new territories in the 20th and 21st centuries. From mid-century European immigrants to New York (Varèse and de Kooning) to 21st century travelers (Nourbakhsh and Mehretu), the program invites attendees to see the New World through new eyes. Included is Anna Thorvaldsdottir’s loving meditation on our wounded planet, which is reinforced through the eyes of her fellow Icelandic artist, Olafur Eliasson and Lou Harrison’s view across the Pacific Ocean toward Asia—combined with the visual art of Georgia O’Keeffe and Peter Terezakis. The program for the performance is listed below.

Edgard Varèse

Octandre (1923)

For Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Contra-bass

Niloufar Nourbakhsh

Veiled (2018)

Cello solo with electronics and video

Anna Thorvaldsdottir

Ro (2013)

Flute, Bass Clarinet, Piano, Percussion, 2 violins, viola, cello

Lou Harrison

Concerto for Violin and Percussion Orchestra (1959)

Violin solo with 5 percussion

“Lou Harrison’s rhythmic and effervescent Violin Concerto with percussion, Varese with his early 20th century cacophony and two young women composers of the 21st century, including Iranian-American Niloufar Nourbakhsh’s paean to her fellow countrywomen, put a human face on the struggle for gender equality,” Schick says. “Anna Thorvaldsdottir examines the peacefulness of the earth in her *Ro*, there will be plenty of energy and verve in this concert!”

Exuberant Moderns takes place on Thursday, August 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the Riverwalk Center and also is offered as “pay what you can.” Registration, tickets and more information can be found at breckcreate.org.

About Steven Schick: Percussionist, conductor, and author Steven Schick was born in Iowa and raised in a farming family. Hailed by Alex Ross in the *New Yorker* as, “one of our supreme living virtuosos, not just of percussion but of any instrument,” he has championed contemporary percussion music for nearly 50 years, and in 2014 was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame.

Steven Schick is Music Director Emeritus of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus, serving as its Music Director from 2006-2022, and served as the Artistic Director of Breckenridge Music Festival from 2017 to 2021. He has guest conducted the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony, Ensemble Modern, the International Contemporary Ensemble, and the Asko/Schönberg Ensemble. He was Artistic Director of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players (2010-2018) and directed programs at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity from 2009-2019, the last three of which as Co-artistic Director, with Claire Chase, of the Summer Classical Music program.

In 2020, Steven Schick won the Ditson Conductor's Award, given by Columbia University for commitment to the performance of American music.

Schick's publications include a book, *The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams*, and numerous recordings including the 2010 "Percussion Works of Iannis Xenakis," and its companion, "The Complete Early Percussion Works of Karlheinz Stockhausen" in 2014 (Mode). The latter received the Deutscheschallplattenkritikpreis for the best new music release of 2015.

Steven Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music and the inaugural holder of the Reed Family Presidential Chair at the University of California, San Diego.

About BIFA: BIFA is a 10-day celebration of Adventure + Creativity + Play. Local, national and international artist talent and organizations, both traditional and unconventional, mingle together to create an eclectic mix of music, dance, film, visual arts and family entertainment. Throughout the festival, Breck Create produces dozens of events across the Town of Breckenridge's cultural venues, public parks, trails and open spaces. The festival begins on Friday, August 11, 2023, runs through Sunday, August 20, 2023, and includes ticketed performances, art installations in addition to art classes and workshops with dozens of opportunities for free, family-friendly experiences. Learn more at breckcreate.org/bifa.

About Breck Create: Breck Create aims to build a dynamic, year-round creative community in Breckenridge. The organization's mission is to deliver inspiring creative experiences that enrich the quality of life for all residents and quality of place for visitors. Breck Create supports and serves artists, creatives, cultural enthusiasts, visitors and the community at large by providing a year-round schedule of performances, exhibitions, screenings, art classes and workshops as well as other engagement opportunities.

The organization maintains, manages and operates the Town of Breckenridge's exceptional cultural facilities and also hosts arts-based events in public gathering spaces throughout Breckenridge. Breck Create's core attractions are the Riverwalk Center—a 750-seat, heated, indoor performance venue—and a lively Arts District campus of renovated historic structures that now function as studio spaces for art classes and workshops. These structures also include affordable rentals for local artists and visiting artist-in-residence participants. The Breckenridge Arts District is a certified district within the [Colorado Creative Industries](https://coloradocreativeindustries.com) Creative Districts program.

More Information: Karlie McLaughlin • 903-821-3422 • karlie@breckcreate.org • breckcreate.org

