

Laurie Anderson

Friday and Saturday, March 8–9, 2002, 8 pm
Zellerbach Hall

Happiness

Conceived and Performed by
Laurie Anderson

Laurie Anderson's new solo work was commissioned in part by:
Cal Performances, University of California, Berkeley, CA; Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH;
PICA (Portland Institute for Contemporary Art) and Leslie B. Durst, Portland, OR;
University of Florida Performing Arts, Gainesville, FL; UCSB Arts & Lectures Santa Barbara, CA;
University Musical Society of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI;
Scottsdale Center for the Arts, Scottsdale, AZ; Society for the Performing Arts, Houston, TX.

This evening's performance by Laurie Anderson is sponsored, in part, by Hear Music.

Cal Performances thanks the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
and the Zellerbach Family Fund for their generous support.

Cal Performances receives additional funding from the National Endowment for the Arts,
a federal agency that supports the visual, literary, and performing arts to benefit all Americans,
and the California Arts Council, a state agency.

For the past year, I've been looking for ways to escape my own perspective by putting myself in weird situations. But shock in the form of terrorism propelled me into a different place. I imagine it's like this for a lot of people now—in uncertain times, we find ourselves living more intensely in the present and asking the questions that have been lurking uncomfortably in the background, like what do we really believe in after all?

Happiness is my way of looking at some of the things that both interest and trouble me—the evolution of behavior, how we learn and what we remember, expectations, the meaning of justice and the effects of increasing speed—colored by the darker elements of doubt and fear.

Every story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end, but as Godard has said “not necessarily in that order.” I have never really trusted traditional narrative and in this piece I am trying to move even further away from it and express the way my own mind actually works. In Happiness, stories float and images recur in different guises. I am not looking for conclusions but for another way to look at the world.

Happiness is also in part a self-portrait. In my past work, I have often mentioned things that I've seen or heard. This is the first time I've used so many experiences from my own life, which in this case has become a kind of touchstone for thinking about deception and fiction, the stories we tell ourselves so that we can go on.

In Happiness, the music is a pulse and a metronome. The sounds are a combination of keyboards, violin, and digital processing, as well as several MIDI triggers. Finally, I get a lot of pleasure out of DJ'ing these sounds, which allows me to improvise. Unlike the technically more complex multimedia shows I often do, Happiness is meant to be flexible and in the moment.

—Laurie Anderson

Laurie Anderson is one of the premier performance artists in the world, and has consistently intrigued, entertained, and challenged audiences with her multimedia presentations. Anderson's artistic career has cast her in roles as various as visual artist, composer, poet, photographer, filmmaker, ventriloquist, electronics whiz, vocalist, and instrumentalist.

Laurie Anderson's “O Superman” launched her recording career, rising to number two on the British pop charts and subsequently appearing on Big Science, the first of Anderson's seven albums on the Warner Brothers label. Other releases include Mister Heartbreak, United States Live, Strange Angels, Bright Red, and the soundtrack to her feature film Home of the Brave. A deluxe box set of her Warner Brothers output, Talk Normal, was released in the fall of 2000

on Rhino/Warner Archives. This past fall, Anderson released her first record for Nonesuch Records, entitled *Life on a String*.

Anderson has toured the United States and abroad numerous times with shows ranging from simple spoken word to elaborate multimedia events. Major works include *United States I-V* (1983), *Empty Places* (1990), *The Nerve Bible* (1995), and *Songs and Stories for Moby Dick*, a multimedia stage performance based on Herman Melville's novel. Anderson toured *Songs and Stories* internationally throughout 1999 and 2000. She has also presented many solo works, her most recent being *The Speed of Darkness* (1997–1998). This past fall, Anderson toured the United States and Europe with a three-person band, performing music from *Life on a String*.

Anderson has published six books and recently collaborated in *Laurie Anderson* by RoseLee Goldberg (Abrams, 2000), a retrospective of her visual work. Text from Anderson's solo performances appears in the new book *Extreme Exposure*, edited by Jo Bonney. Her visual work has been presented in major museums in the United States and Europe. Anderson is represented by the Sean Kelly Gallery in New York.

Having created numerous videos and films, Anderson has contributed music to films by Wim Wenders and Jonathan Demme; dance pieces by Bill T. Jones, Trisha Brown, and Molissa Fenley; and a score for Robert LePage's theater production *The Far Side of the Moon*. She has created pieces for National Public Radio, the BBC, and Expo '92 in Seville. In 1997, she curated the two-week *Meltdown Festival* at Royal Festival Hall in London. Her orchestra work *Songs for A.E.* premiered at Carnegie Hall in February 2000, played by the American Composers Orchestra, conducted by Dennis Russell Davis.

Recognized worldwide as a leader in the groundbreaking use of technology in the arts, Anderson collaborated with Interval Research Corporation, a research and development laboratory founded by Paul Allen and David Liddle, in the exploration of new creative tools, including the *Talking Stick*. She also wrote the entry about New York for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, hosted the PBS special *Art 21*, and, mostly recently, received the 2001 Tenco Prize for Songwriting in San Remo, Italy, and the 2001 *Deutsche Schallplattenpreis* for *Life On A String*.

For Laurie Anderson
Bill Berger, production manager
Ned Steinberger, violin design

For more information on Laurie Anderson, please visit www.laurieanderson.com.

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For more information on Pomegranate Arts and Laurie Anderson's Happiness tour, please visit www.pomegranatearts.com.