



**For Immediate Release:  
Fear No Music Honors  
Mulugeta Seraw Day with  
*The F Word***

*"Come give witness to the power of creative transmutation as some of this town's finest musicians turn national heartache into unadulterated hope."*

- Portland Mercury, Sept. 2019

September 13, 2019 (Portland, OR): Fear No Music reflects on the first thirty years since the brutal murder of Ethiopian student Mulugeta Seraw with an extraordinary multimedia performance two days prior to the anniversary of his horrific death on the streets of SE Portland. This is the second installment of Fear No Music's "Justice (Just Us)," season which centers around restorative justice and forgiveness-based healing.



***The F Word: A Memorial to Mulugeta Seraw***

**WHEN:** Monday, November 11, 2019 | 7:30 pm

**WHERE:** The Old Church Concert Hall

**COST:** \$10-20 in advance; \$15-25 at the door

**SINGLE TICKETS:** [fearnomusic.org](http://fearnomusic.org)

**SEASON SUBSCRIPTION TICKETS:** [fearnomusic.org](http://fearnomusic.org)

This concert features the World Premiere of *Nightwalk*, a significant multimedia chamber work by Portland-born, Egyptian-American composer [Ryan Francis](#) (photo left), known for his "elegant waves of auditory bliss" (*Oregon ArtsWatch*) and "aggressively original musical language that uses nuance, precision and stylistic-variance to create music that is at once lush, probing and inventive." (WQXR) Comprising one half of the program, *Nightwalk* takes the audience on a filmed walk from SE

31st and Pine (the site of Seraw's murder) to the doors of The Old Church, reinforcing the proximity within which we all live to ongoing divisions within our community. Performed live by the Fear No Music ensemble, the score includes flute, clarinet, string quartet, piano, and percussion. Francis created the film component in collaboration with his sister [Tracy Cameron Francis](#), acclaimed Artistic Director of Boom Arts and the Festival Director for the Cascade African Film Festival. Ryan writes of the work:

*“The first thing that struck me when I saw a photo of Seraw was how much he looked like my father, who passed away a few years ago. Seraw had the same hair, mustache and glasses that my father wore in the 80s and 90s, and because of this, it’s difficult for me to look at photos of Seraw. I wonder if my father, an Egyptian immigrant who moved to Portland in the late 70s, recognized himself in Seraw’s image and what that conjured for him. Reflecting back, I now realize how different my father’s experience living in Portland must have been than what he presented to me.*

*More generally, it’s challenging to process physical proximity to atrocities like Seraw’s murder, and so I created a piece that connects the audience’s real-time presence to the location of the tragedy, providing a communal space for reflection and solidarity. The idea of a night walk triggers very different emotions depending on one’s identity: it can be a purely aesthetic experience, and it can be terrifying. I want the audience to grapple with the different perceptions of the first-person view of the walk portrayed on the film, and for the music to support and enrich their feelings about what they are seeing.”*

The program complement to *Nightwalk* is [David Bruce](#)’s modern epic *Gumboots* for clarinet and string quartet, featuring one of Fear No Music’s two new members, James Shields taking a star turn with the clarinet part. Commissioned by Carnegie Hall and performed and recorded to general acclaim many times during its 15 year history, this instantly appealing piece is “a moving work of great beauty and vitality that conveys a sense of journey.” (*The International Clarinet Association*) From the composer:

*Gumboot Dancing... was born out of the brutal labour conditions in South Africa under Apartheid, in which black miners were chained together and wore Gumboots (wellington boots) while they worked in the flooded gold mines, because it was cheaper for the owners to supply the boots than to drain the floodwater from the mine. Apparently slapping the boots and chains was used by the workers as a form of communication which was otherwise banned in the mine, and this later developed into a form of dance. If the examples of Gumboot Dancing available online are anything to go by, it is characterised by a huge vitality and zest for life. So this for me is a striking example of how something beautiful and life-enhancing can come out of something far more negative. Of course this paradox has a far simpler explanation - the resilience of the human spirit.*

This concert takes place in conjunction with a display of The F Word exhibit, a touring exhibit from The Forgiveness Project, a UK-based organization that uses storytelling to promote personal and community healing and restorative justice. A thought provoking collection of arresting images and personal narratives exploring forgiveness in the face of atrocity, The F Word exhibit draws together voices from South Africa, America, Israel, Palestine, Northern Ireland and England. The exhibition examines forgiveness as a healing process, a path out of victimhood and, ultimately, a journey of hope. The exhibit will be on display at The Old Church for audiences to explore before, during, and after the concert. Learn more about The F Word exhibit at [www.theforgivenessproject.com/f-word-exhibition](http://www.theforgivenessproject.com/f-word-exhibition).

Fear No Music Artistic Director Kenji Bunch states:

*“The name Mulugeta Seraw was seared into my memory thirty years ago, as a teenager deeply shaken by the reports of his brutal murder in my hometown. In a sense, this concert has been in*

*production ever since that time. I had an inkling then that music could somehow be used to help heal the wounds of our community, but I could never have anticipated this: an evening celebrating the practice of restorative justice, a partnership with the international advocacy group The Forgiveness Project, and a world premiere by fellow Portland-born composer Ryan Francis that will bring together disparate sounds, cultures, and ideologies into a shared space. This one is going to be special.”*



This performance features Fear No Music core musicians (pictured above): Amelia Lukas, flute; James Shields, clarinet; Inés Voglar Belgique, violin; Joël Belgique, viola; Nancy Ives, cello; Jeff Payne, piano; and Michael Roberts, percussion; with guest violinist, Keiko Araki

The shared experience of Fear No Music’s live performances encourage conversations about and inspired action around the commonalities of our human experience that transcend our differences. The Justice (Just Us) season provides an amplified voice to the stories of oppressed peoples, environmental issues, and important musical works that survived initially dismissive reviews. Through these programs, Fear No Music offers an alternative way to process emotions associated with the stark realities of the world we live in, thus offering an avenue for healing and positive change.

**Upcoming Justice (Just Us) concerts include:**

- **January 20 - *Locally Sourced Sounds VI***
- **March 23 - *Just Us***
- **May 18 - *Haters Gonna Hate***
- **June 14 - *Folk you, too!***

*Fear No Music promotes music education through the high quality public performance of modern and contemporary classical music, and by offering groundbreaking youth mentorship in composition. This flexible chamber music ensemble comprised of some of Oregon's most talented performers promotes living composers and exposes audiences to new music being made both locally and globally through a uniquely relevant annual concert series. The group educates and trains the next generation of young composers in our community by way of the Young Composers Project. Fear No Music is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. [fearnomusic.org](http://fearnomusic.org).*

**For additional information, media materials and interview inquiries, please contact:**  
**Amelia Lukas, Aligned Artistry; 415-516-4851; [amelia@alignedartistry.com](mailto:amelia@alignedartistry.com); [alignedartistry.com](http://alignedartistry.com)**

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