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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2015

## SONiC Composer Spotlight - Clarice Assad

**Brazilian-American Clarice Assad is a Grammy-nominated composer, pianist, and vocalist of a wide variety of styles of music, including her own original concepts. Described by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as "a serious triple threat," Clarice is equally comfortable as a performer, a band leader, and a composer. ACO's **SONiC Festival** is excited to present Clarice in all these roles at its final AfterHours concert, **Wednesday, 10pm at Drom in the East Village**, along with dynamic jazz ensemble **Eco-Music Big Band**.**

**Clarice was kind enough to answer some questions about her upcoming performance.**



Composer/performer/bandleader Clarice Assad

**American Composers Orchestra: As a composer you bridge gaps**

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**between jazz, classical, avant garde, Brazilian and world music. Is there any one style that you think serves as the basis for your program with Off The Cliff, or are they equal influences?**

Clarice Assad: I chose *Vem pro Rio* as a starting point. It is a simple, straightforward samba that serves as a nice contrast between the styles that follow, which are nothing like the samba / Brazilian bossa nova rhythms that most people know. We will be performing music from some of Brazil's most interesting young contemporary composers/songwriters, who are searching for new sounds in their own unique ways. For example, in Thiago Amud's political piece *A Marcha dos Desacontecimentos*, he builds this complex, chromatic harmonic world that floats atop a simple rhythmic style that originated in the early 1920's, known as the carnival march. It sounds really interesting. Gabriel Levy's *Baião de Cinco* is also quite innovative, because he combines melodic fragments found in forró music with Arabic overtones. As a composer who enjoys bringing musical styles together, I have great appreciation for what these artists are doing, and I am also really excited to share this music with people who might not normally come across anything like this.

**ACO: Your ensemble, Off The Cliff, features some truly world class players. Can you talk about what brought you together, especially in regards to your fusion of musical styles?**

CA: We were all brought together by our passion to perform music that we loved - our beginnings weren't very professional. In fact, we couldn't make it a priority as far as how much time we could dedicate to it. If we had a show somewhere, we almost never had time to prepare... During performances, I recall many times not knowing exactly how a piece was supposed to start or end. There were so many funny and exciting moments because of this. Part of the secret for this to work is trust. And part of the magic, I found, was being on the edge of falling apart, but somehow, being able to hold it together. That's why we call the ensemble Off The Cliff!

Originally the group started out as a trio, made up of people who could play more than one instrument. The idea was to move back and forth between instruments and in different combinations, to keep the music fresh and interesting. Some of the instruments (say, the banjo, the mandolin, or cavaquinho, and the vast array of percussion instruments that Keita Ogawa performs) helped create the melding of styles quite naturally. Within the past year, our original ensemble performed extensively in places where other musicians would join us (string sections from orchestras, students, local ensembles, guest artists, etc.) and we've become this 'modular' group, that can adapt itself to different places and situations, depending on what they call for.

For SONiC, we are being joined by phenomenal players such as [Adam](#)

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Niewood, Matthew Rohde, Su Terry, Sergio Krakowski, and Petros Klampanis - and also lead singers Lara Bello and Sissy Castrogiovanni.

### ACO: What other SONiC Festival concerts are you planning to see this week? Anything you're excited about?

CA: I wish I could go to every single one of them!! The amount of talent that is being showcased is quite outstanding. I am, though, crazy about vocal music so I was super excited to see that [Roomful of Teeth](#) was going to be featured. They are simply phenomenal.

CLARICE ASSAD - SCA...  



Follow Clarice Assad on Facebook and Twitter

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

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(5) ASCAP (1) Audience Choice Awards (1) Austin Jaquith (2) B. P. Herrington (2) Barbara Burch (1) Bassoon Concerto (1) Ben Herman (1) benjamin taylor (2) **Berkeley Symphony** (7) Betty Shabazz (1) Biennial (2) Bill Holab (1) Border Vanguard (2) BPO (1) Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (3) Burkina Electric (1) burning (1) **Carl St. Clair** (2) **Carnegie Hall** (10) Chen Hui Jen (1) chi-hui jen (1) Chiayu Hsu (1) Chicago (2) Christian Baldini (2) Christina Jensen (1) **Christopher Rountree** (3) Christopher Theofanidis (1) Cindi Hubbard (1) clint needham (1) **coLABoratory** (14) colin gee (1) Composer Portrait Video (4) composer spotlight (3) composers upfront (1) curt cacioppo (1) Dan Beaudoin (1) Dan Lame (1) Dan Marschak (1) **Dan Visconti** (3) Dane Lam (1) Daniel Temkin (2) Danse Macabre (1) Dave Wilson (2) david garner (1) David Kirkland Garner (1) David Lang (1) David Michalek (1) David Schiff (4) Debussy (1) Delta David Gier (1) **Derek Bermel** (16) Detroit Symphony (3) DiMenna Center for Classical Music (1) donal fox (1) Du Yun (2) Duke Ellington (1) **EarShot** (52) EarShot Berkeley (4) EarShot Buffalo (5) **Earshot Colorado** (19) EarShot Detroit (3) earshot memphis (10) Earshot Nashville (3) EarShot Sand Diego (1) Ed Harsh (2) education (1) eighth blackbird (1) Eliot Fisk (1) Eric Lindsay (1) erin gee (1) **Fang Man** (2) favela (1) **Fergus Macleod** (2) Frances Richards (1) Frank Oteri (1) fred ho (1) Fred Lerdahl (1) **George Lewis** (8) **George Manahan** (9) Gildas Quartet (1) Greg Evans (1) Gregg August (1) Hannah Lash (1) Haralabos Stafylakis (1) heavy metal (1) Howard Mandel (1) huang ruo (1) Instant Encore (1) james feddeck (2) **James Newton** (5) Janet Jieru Chen (1) Jared Miller (1) **Jazz** (6) Jazz Composer (1) **Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute** (21) Jazz Pianist (1) JCOI (10) Jean Ahn (2) Jeremy Podgursky (3) Jeremy Robins (2) Jesse Jones (1) Jim Kendrick (1) Joana Carneiro (4) Joel Harrison (3) john corigliano (2)

John Glover (4) John Zorn (1) Jonathan Bailey  
 Holland (1) Jordan Kuspa (1) Joshua Groffman  
 (1) **Judith Sainte Croix (5)** Julia Adolphe (1)  
 Kasumi (2) Kate Soper (1) Kati Agoos (1) keeril  
 makan (1) Kevin Scott (1) Kohei Muklai (1) Koto  
 (1) Kyle Peter Rotolo (1) **La Jolla Symphony**  
 (6) Laura Koepke (1) Laura Schwendinger  
 Shadings Joan La Barbara (1) **Leonard Slatkin**  
 (3) **Lines On A Point (3)** Lisa Renee Coons (1)  
 Loren Loiacono (1) Luciana Souza (1) **Lukas**  
**Ligeti (2)** Lyn Liston (1) marcos balter (1)  
**Margaret Brouwer (2)** Marimba Lumina (1)  
 Mark DeChiazza (1) **Martin Kuuskmann (1)**  
 Matthew Evan Taylor (1) **Matthew Kraemer (1)**  
 Matti Kovler (1) **Max Grafe (1)** **Melinda Wagner**  
 (3) **Melody Eotvos (1)** **Memphis Symphony (1)**  
 Meredith Monk (1) **michael dessen (6)**  
 Michael Djupstrom (1) **michael gandolfi (4)**  
 Michael Geller (3) Michael Roth (1) michael-  
 thomas foumai (1) Miya Masaoka (1) **Monk's**  
**Sphere (3)** Morton Subotnick (1) **Motormouth**  
 (1) **My Brightest Garment (1)** Narong  
 Prangcharoen (1) **Nathan Kelly (1)** **new music**  
**readings (11)** **New York**  
**Philharmonic (13)** **New York Times (1)**  
 Nicholas Omiccioli (2) **Nicole Mitchell (4)**  
 Night (1) **Ole Mathisen (1)** **Orchestra**  
**Underground (12)** **Oren Fader (2)**  
 Other Mountain (1) **paquito d'rivera (2)**  
 patricio DaSilva (2) **Paul Chihara (3)** **paul**  
**frucht (2)** **Peter Fahey (1)** **Pin Hsin Lin (3)**  
**Playing It UNSafe ACO (15)** **Qian Yi**  
 (1) **Rand Steiger (3)** **Raymond J. Lustig (4)**  
**rehearsal (2)** **Ricardo Romaneiro (2)** **Robert**  
**Beaser (6)** **robert black (1)** **Robert Honstein (1)**  
**Robert Spano (3)** **Ruben Naeff (1)** **Ruth**  
**Malaczec (1)** **Samantha Boshnack (3)** **San**  
**Diego (1)** **San Diego Symphony (2)**  
**Scorestream (1)** **seth josel (1)** **Shards of Serenity**  
 (1) **Simon Tarr (2)** **Sivan Eldar (2)** **Slippages**  
 (1) **Sound Off (5)** **Spirals (1)** **Stalks Hounds (1)**  
**statement to the court (1)** **stefan lano (1)** **Stephen**  
**Biagini (1)** **Stephen Hart (1)** **Stephen Taylor (1)**  
**Steve Shick (2)** **Steve Stucky (3)** **strange**  
**pilgrims (1)** **Texas (1)** **The Crossing (2)** **Theo**  
**Bleckmann (1)** **Thomas Larcher (1)** **Three**  
**Glorious Days (1)** **Thurgood Marshall (1)** **Tim**

Sullivan (4) Tobin Chodos (1) Trombone (1)  
Troy Herion (4) Two Rivers (1) Under  
Construction (4) **Underwood New  
Music Reading (15)** Underwood  
Readings 2010 (7) University of California  
San Diego (1) Vera's Ghosts (1) Wang A-Mao (1)  
Wang Lu (1) William Dougherty (1) Women  
composers (1) **World Premiere (5)** Xi Wang  
(1) Yotam Haber (3) Zankel Hall (9)

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