Piece Title: *Exercise for Hands Right Left and Deserted Mouth*
Composer: Susan Parenti
Performer: Bonnie Whiting

Susan Parenti’s *Exercise for Hands Right, Left and Deserted Mouth* (1987) explores percussive sound as an imitation of and a stand-in for the human voice. Initially conceived as a work for a percussionist and an actor (usually Parenti herself), the composer has consented to performances by a single percussionist. Eugene Novotney gave the first solo speaking percussionist performances in the 1990’s, and Whiting began playing the work in 2014. The piece begins as a one-sided telephone conversation; the percussionist speaks with an imaginary correspondent who we hear only through the instruments. It devolves quickly into misheard turns of phrase that can be understood several ways, bombastic vocal and percussive utterances, threats, pleas, and satirized versions of popular and patriotic songs. In the end, it examines what we try to do as we communicate through language, exploring what is lost and what might be beneath the surface of our words.

Susan Parenti (b. 1950) is a composer, activist, and performer. She received her bachelor’s degree from Northwestern University. Following two years of study abroad, she returned to the U.S. to attend the University of Illinois, where she completed master's and doctoral degrees in composition as an advisee of Herbert Brün. She is one of the founding organizers of the School for Designing a Society, a grassroots school for social change in Urbana, Il. She also collaborates with Dr. Patch Adams and his Gesundheit Institute: a non-profit healthcare organization based on the belief that one cannot separate the health of the individual from the health of the family, the community, the society, and the world. In 1996, she wrote a ground-breaking article in Perspectives of New Music, entitled “Composing the Music School: Proposals for a Feminist Composition Curriculum.” She has authored three books: *The Politics of the Adjective “Political”, “I” and My Mouth and Their Irresistible Life in Language*, and *Playing Attention to Language*. She is currently co-writing a book with Patch Adams called *The Politics of Care*, and serves as president of the Herbert Brün Society and caretaker of the Herbert Brün House and Archives in Urbana, IL. –Bonnie Whiting