

San Francisco Contemporary Music Players  
David Milnes, Music Director  
Monday, 15 November 2004 \* 8 pm  
Center for the Arts – Theater

Whispering. Murmuring. Ranting.

ADA GENTILE  
*In un silenzio ordinato* (1985)

ADA GENTILE  
*Come dal nulla* (1983)  
United States premiere

Carey Bell, bass clarinet

IVAN FEDELE  
*Maja* (1999)  
United States premiere

Elissa Johnston, soprano

INTERMISSION

ADA GENTILE  
*Canzon prima* (1990)  
United States premiere

FREDERIC RZEWSKI  
*Coming Together* (1972)

Robert Ernst, narrator

#### ADA GENTILE (B. 1947)

Respected Italian music critic Michele Porzio writes that “Ada Gentile’s music reveals a particular interest in a delicate play of colors. Her compositions nearly always evolve within the lightest of sound textures, indeed within a somewhat limited range of sound. Between those limits she creates a dense and continuous movement which revolves around a number of acoustic kernels. The result is a sort of refined sonic illusionism.” Whether one hears in this intricate “illusion” the rhythms of the natural world or the careful craft of the composer, Gentile’s unique combination of spontaneity and structure invites intense listening.

Gentile gained diplomas in piano and composition at Rome’s Conservatorio di S. Cecilia before doing postgraduate work with Goffredo Petrassi at the Accademia Nazionale di S. Cecilia. In the nearly thirty years since that time, Gentile’s orchestral, chamber, and vocal works have been internationally recognized for their innovative treatment of texture and timbre (tone color). She is intimately familiar with early music, having reconstructed a chamber opera by the seventeenth-century composer Francesca Caccini (*La liberazione di Ruggiero dall’isola di Alcina*, 1994). She has also made a name for herself as a committed advocate of contemporary music, organizing concerts of Italian music in China and a series of six concerts of contemporary music from around the world for Rome’s 2003 Festival Nuovi Spazi Musicali, which she founded and which she has served as Artistic Director since 1978.

Gentile is best known for her attention to musical nuances. Speaking from a very different time and place, Arnold Schoenberg praised Anton Webern’s music in 1924 for its ability “to express a novel in a single gesture, a joy in a breath.” Gentile’s music has the same expressive concentration. Each moment in her pointillistic sound canvases seems alive with its own particular energy. Extended performance techniques, microtonal inflections, and tiny gradations in dynamics enable her to create sounds that are utterly new. Transparent textures are naturally to be found in her most intimate chamber works, such as *Momenti veloci* (1992) for flute and harp. But her larger works also create intimate sound worlds. In her septet *Small Points* (1984), for example, the instruments engage of a polyphonic play that is as much about tone color as it is about traditional counterpoint. Even Gentile’s orchestral score *Veni lumen cordis* (1993, for clarinet and orchestra) maintains a clarity and serenity that has led one reviewer to call it “an oasis of delicacy.” Like *Canzon prima*, which we will hear tonight, *Veni lumen cordis* exists in two versions: one with a clarinet soloist and one with a solo vocalist. Gentile thus suggests that we embrace the human voice for its timbre (and not just its ability to convey words) and that we invite our instruments to breathe and sing.

Although her oeuvre boasts some whimsical titles—*Flighty* (1982), *Why not?* (1985), *Gli studietti di Betty Boop* (1992), and *Nonsense* (1994)—the more serious aspirations of Gentile’s music are often close to the surface. Her *Cantata per la pace* (Cantata for peace) for speaker, mixed chorus, and orchestra was commissioned by the Vatican to celebrate the millennium. Combining secular texts drawn from the Nobel prize-winner Salvatore Quasimodo and allusions to the Catholic liturgy, the cantata uses two languages to “reach the hearts of all people, without distinction of race, religion, or culture” and “to involve the listeners in a prayer for peace that rises, very strong, above all the daily problems from every corner of the world.” *Cantata per la*

*pace* received its premiere at Rome's final "Jubilee" Concert (2000) and was favorably received on a world tour including Brasilia, St. Petersburg, Ascoli Piceno, Beijing, and Taipei; upcoming performances are planned in Kiev, Seoul, and Rostov.

Among Gentile's honors are prizes in the Gaudeamus and I. S. C. M. competitions, an Award for Cultural Merit from the Polish Ministry of Culture, membership in the Amici dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia, and commissions from Hans Werner Henze, the Radio Orchestras of Rome, Milan, and Naples, the French Ministry of Culture, the Comune of Genoa, the Centro Coordinamento Culturale of Venice, and the Munich Biennale, where her chamber opera *La liberazione de Ruggiero dall'isola di Alcina* (1994) played to sold-out halls in all three of its performances. Her works have been performed on five continents and at the most prestigious venues in Europe and North America, including Paris's Centre Pompidou, New York's Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, Madrid's Teatro Reale and Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, the Salzburg Mozarteum, the Chicago Art Institute, the Central Conservatory in Beijing, Budapest's Ferenc Liszt Academy, La Fenice in Venice, Rome Opera Theater, and many others. In addition to her long-standing work with the annual Nuovi Spazi Musicali festival, Gentile has served as artistic director of the Goffredo Petrassi Chamber Orchestra (1986-88), on the governing board of the Venice Biennale (1993-97), and as artistic director of the Teatro Lirico V. Basso in Ascoli Piceno (1996-99). She is currently Associate Director of the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome and Vice President of AGIMUS (a musical association for young people).

***In un silenzio ordinato (In an ordered silence) (1985)***

*for flute, clarinet, two percussionists, piano and violin*

How many ways are there to move into and out of silence? Gentile's *In un silenzio ordinato* might be considered a response to this question, but she offers more than a simple catalog of answers. Extraordinary processes are at work, giving order to the performers' interaction and shaping their utterances. Although the players may create the impression of freedom and spontaneity, they need an impressive degree of control and coordination to master the subtleties called for in the score: harmonics, muted or distorted timbres, glissandi (slides), evanescent ornaments, and dynamic levels that fall to pianississississimo [ppppp].

In a similar way, the apparently intuitive progress of *In un silenzio ordinato* masks a more structured unfolding. The very first sounds of the piece—described by Allan Kozinn of the *New York Times* as "an amorphous, tactile shimmer"—contain the seeds of events to come. According to the composer, "At the beginning, which is characterized by an atomization of musical matter and based on extremely subtle gradations in intensity, one hears material that will soon be elaborated rhythmically and melodically. The work is rigorously structured, organized around several, continuously fluctuating elements that gradually change into fields of increased rhythmic and sonic density. In this process, small cells generate melodic fragments with intimate sonorities that are transparent and rarified but at the same time compact. It is a musical language, rustling and thin but always subtly vibrant, and open to musical continuities as they emerge."

***Come dal nulla (As if from nothing) (1983)***

*for bass clarinet*

Gentile describes *Come dal nulla* as a "monologue for clarinet" built of "sound effects" and "evocative timbres." Indeed, almost every note in her score carries its own expressive markings, requiring the soloist to assume in turn all the roles one might encounter in an evening-length drama. As is typical for the composer, each moment has its own quiet integrity; however, one can hear an irregular increase and decrease in momentum as the work unfolds. The slightly uncertain trills of the opening give way to more rhapsodic fragments which seem to surround a central "nervous" section before the contemplative close.

As its title suggests, *Come dal nulla* lives on the edge of audibility, making the special performance techniques that the composer calls for even more difficult to execute than they would be if they were louder. Many of these "sound effects" are most striking for their novelty: pitches that are "bent" in and out of tune, rapid tremolos, "slap tongue" articulations, and harmonics made to sound far above the clarinet's normal range. Occasionally, however, a more familiar gesture also floats to the surface—a sigh, a flourish, a staccato outburst, an echo. Together such moments make Gentile's monologue not merely a technical tour-de-force, but an expressive one.

***Canzon prima (First song) (1990)***

*for E flat clarinet and three B flat clarinets*

In describing her quartet *Canzon prima*, Ada Gentile observes that the work required "careful research into the physical relationships between different types of sound production, articulations, and even the bodies of the instruments." The result of this research, however, is more magical than mathematical: "A breath of sound, produced by the briefest of moments and modules, like whispers that arrive at the most subtle silences in which all vibration ceases."

In its current incarnation—for clarinet trio and E flat clarinet (rather than female voice)—*Canzon prima* seems to suggest the gentle and rough frictions of flora and fauna: rapid rustlings that intensify and falter, miniature movements that diverge and coincide. Whether its title is meant to evoke the birdsong of daybreak, the earliest human vocalizations, or some cosmic harmony that precedes even these primal sounds, this "quartet" sets more in motion than the coordinated interplay of its four performers. Perhaps it was this work that inspired the Italian poet Laura Rossi Ravaoli to exclaim that Gentile's music, "vibrates in a fluid suspension, like luminescent marine plankton shimmering on a dark night. Faint paths intertwine, break off, meander; veiled murmurs of richly variegated little creatures arise, barely discernible, to hint at contained joy, at thoughtful curiosity, in trembling expectation as if at the birth of the world."

**IVAN FEDELE (B. 1953)**

One concert at a time, audiences are embracing the music of Ivan Fedele, hearing in it the

scintillating instrumentation and dramatic intensity that have made him a favorite composer in his native Italy and in France. Born in Lecce in southeastern Italy, he studied piano at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory, composition with Franco Donatoni at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and philosophy at the State University in Milan. During the 1990s, Fedele gained recognition in Paris, completing commissions for some of its most prestigious ensembles: *Duo en résonance* for the Ensemble InterContemporain in 1991, a Piano Concerto for Radio France in 1993, and *Richiamo* (Signal) (1993-94, for brass, percussion, and electronics) for the Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM) in 1993-94. His music is just beginning to reach the United States.

While one might think that Fedele discovered his love of instrumental tone colors while in France—a land known for the shimmering timbres of Debussy and the latter-day experiments in resonance of the “spectral” school—in fact his first major orchestral score *Chiari* (Lights) (1981) already exhibits a lush and lovely surface. Like many of Fedele’s compositions, *Chiari* calls attention not just to the sounds of particular instruments, but also to their placement on stage. This interest in the spatialization of sound is even more apparent in works like *Richiamo*, which arranges its performers symmetrically around the stage and in *Duo en résonance*, which approximates the echoing antiphonal choirs characteristic of Giovanni Gabrieli and other composers of the Venetian Renaissance.

Driving Fedele’s instrumental stagecraft is a theatrical understanding of the interaction between performing forces. It is not surprising, then, that he has shown a special fondness for the concerto. Beginning with the Viola Concerto of 1990 and continuing up to the *Arco de Vento* (Arch of wind) for clarinet and orchestra (2002-04), Fedele has written an impressive series of works that showcase a soloist against an ensemble background. While drawing on romantic notions of virtuosity—especially in the Violin Concerto (1998-99)—his works have also suggested strikingly new solo-ensemble relationships. In addition to the more recent *Ruah* (2001-02), *Profilo in eco* (Profile in echo) (1994-95) features the flute and treats the orchestra as a sort of “resonating chamber,” amplifying and diffusing gestures initiated by the soloist. The Cello Concerto (1996) operates in a similar fashion, and subsequent concertos have further multiplied the sonic possibilities of the genre by adding live electronics—for example, *L’Orizzonte de Elettra* (Elektra’s horizon) for viola, live electronics and chamber orchestra (1997).

Other works in Fedele’s oeuvre make the dramatic impulse behind his concertos even more explicit. In an interview for the 2003 Warsaw Autumn Festival, he describes his orchestral work *Scena* (1997-98), which was written to be performed at La Scala (Italy’s most famous operatic stage), as an attempt to “realize a composition whose individual sections would appear as characters in the so-called theatre of memory ... in a fashion similar to the characters in an opera.” Only two of Fedele’s works are literally “stage works”: the early *Dodici figlie di O* (The twelve daughters of O) with choreography by Mietta Corli (1977, for dancer, piano, and tape) and the secular cantata *Oltre Narciso* (Behind Narcissus) on the composer’s own text (1982, for singers, dancers, chorus, and chamber orchestra). Many of his scores, however, rely on the dramatic delivery of texts, especially those by his countryman Giuliano Corti (b. 1948), a philosopher and man of letters who has lent his talents to numerous film and industrial design projects. In addition to his literary criticism, novels, plays, and screenplays, Corti has provided the words for Fedele’s *Coram* (1995-96) and the subsequent *Coram Requiem* (1996), as well as

the acclaimed septet *Animus anima* (2000) and the work we will hear tonight, *Maja* (1999). His words also helped inspire both of Fedele’s compositions for the Italian radio: *Barbara Mitica* (1996, for tape) and *Orfeo al cinema Orfeo* (Orpheus at the Orfeo Theater) (1994, for two speaking roles and MIDI keyboard). In addition, Fedele has composed a new soundtrack for Jean Epstein’s 1928 film *La Chute de la maison Usher* (The Fall of the House of Usher) and the music for an interactive installation by Milan’s Studio Azzurro.

Fedele’s music has garnered many honors, including a Gaudeamus Award for his first String Quartet, First Prize in Parma’s Goffredo Petrassi competition for his orchestral score *Epos* (Epic), the Chévalier de l’ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the French Ministry of Culture, and Italy’s “Barocco” and “Diomede” Awards. His work has been championed by the Paris-based Ensemble InterContemporain, which is widely regarded as one of Europe’s leading new music groups; they have programmed no less than sixteen of his pieces. Fedele has also received world premieres from the major orchestras and contemporary music groups of France and Italy, including Nuove Sincronie, Ensemble VarlIse, Contrechamps, Gruppo Musica Insieme, Accroche Note, and Octandre, as well as the major orchestras of France and Italy. His works have been programmed by Pierre Boulez, Riccardo Muti, Myung-Whun Chung, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Leonard Slatkin, and concerts have been dedicated to his music at the Festival Musica in Strasbourg, Festival de Caen, Venice Biennale, Festival de Barcellona, Festival Milano Musica, and Festival of Helsinki. Fedele teaches at the Strasbourg Conservatory and his recent projects include *Odos* for oboist Heinz Holliger and the choir of Radio Stuttgart, the chamber work *Archipelago Moebius* (commissioned by France for the ensemble Carré), and a setting of Sophocles’s *Antigone*, which will be premiered in 2007 by the Teatro Comunale di Firenze.

### ***Maja* (1999)**

*for soprano, piano, percussion, flute, clarinet, violin, and cello*

The mythological Maia had many facets: lover of Zeus, mother of Hermes, oldest sister among the Pleiades. She has just as many in Ivan Fedele’s work for soprano and six instruments, for she evokes both the present and the archaic and she must cover a continuum from speech-like and sometimes stuttering declamation to ecstatic glissandi and fractured song. Like much of Giuliano Corti’s poetry, the text for *Maja* takes classical Greece as the point of departure for imaginative recreation. In this case, the poetry is imagistic rather than narrative with phrases that revel in the sounds of their own syllables and in the sensuous embrace of nature.

When Fedele first set this text in 1988 (for soprano, speaker, piano, and electronics), he gave it the subtitle “outline of an opera finale.” Revisiting it eleven years later, Fedele retained the dramatic impulse, but much of his 1999 *Maja* suggests ritual more than opera. Following Corti’s text, the musical structure is highly sectional, employing different degrees of vocal lyricism for different stanzas. In most of these sections, however, pitches, rhythms, and phrases recur to form an enigmatic litany. Amid ecstatic outbursts, melodies double back on themselves as if improvised from recitational formulas, stretching to familiar high points, falling to familiar low points, but remaining flexible in between. Propulsive gestures from the ensemble quickly dissolve into static swirls of activity, percussive interjections initiate new but short-lived phases

of activity, and against this brilliant background, a modern *Maja* regains the ancient power of incantation.

### **FREDERIC RZEWSKI (B. 1938)**

In the June 1998 issue of *Chamber Music*, critic Mark Swed called attention to the three-fold reputation of Frederic Rzewski, calling him “a people’s artist, an obsessive bean-counting musical theorist’s composer, and a musician’s musician” (*Chamber Music*, June 1998). These three aspects of Rzewski’s career—the revolutionary, the abstract thinker, and the performer—have brought him into contact with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players many times, beginning in the late 1980s. In addition to featuring such works as his quartet *Song and Dance* (1977), *To the Earth* (1985, for speaking percussionist and four flower pots), and *Whimwhams* (1993, United States premiere), the Players commissioned and gave the world premiere of his octet *Roses* (1989). Rzewski himself performed his Piano Sonata during the ensemble’s 1991-92 season, and he appeared as narrator in a 1989 rendition of the work we will hear tonight, the now-classic *Coming Together* (1972).

Rzewski began his career as a pianist and a composer, receiving instruction in the most complex compositional methods of the 1950s and 1960s. Born in Massachusetts, he studied at Harvard University with Walter Piston and Roger Sessions before spending two years at Princeton University, working with Milton Babbitt and taking classes in philosophy, and Greek. After leaving Princeton in 1960, Rzewski spent the next decade primarily in Europe, beginning with a two-year Fulbright to Italy, where he studied with Luigi Dallapiccola, made connections with such performers as flutist Severino Gazzelloni, and became familiar with the politically engaged composers at the forefront of the Italian avant garde—Luciano Berio and especially Luigi Nono.

Although he began and ended the 1960s in Rome, Rzewski’s reputation as a pianist specializing in new music took him all over Europe, playing works by Pierre Boulez and Mauricio Kagel as well as those of his countrymen John Cage, Morton Feldman, and Christian Wolff. He gave the world premieres of Karlheinz Stockhausen’s *Klavierstück X* (1962) and *Plus-Minus* (1964), taught at the Cologne Courses for New Music, and won a Ford Foundation grant to study with Elliott Carter in Berlin where he began composing such electronic works as *Zoologischer Garten* (1964). Rzewski brought these varied experiences back to Rome in 1966 and, together with Alvin Curran and Richard Teitelbaum, founded Musica Elettronica Viva (MEV), one of the first ensembles devoted to live electronic music and group improvisation, an interactive process that he employed in his own *Work Songs* (1967-69).

Political themes began to appear in Rzewski’s work during the late 1960s, and this trend quickly gathered force. Back in New York City, struggling to make ends meet, he became concerned both with socialism and the accessibility of his scores. “It seemed to me,” he recalls, “that there was no reason why the most difficult and complex formal structures could not be expressed in a form which could be understood by a wide variety of listeners.” These two concerns led to some of his most famous pieces, including *Coming Together* and the mammoth set of piano variations known as *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* (1975). Taking its title and theme from a song composed by Sergio Ortega and the Chilean leftist organization Quilapayún, *The People*

*United* brings together 18th-century counterpoint and 20<sup>th</sup>-century serial techniques, unified by a driving rhythmic energy and scheme of precise numerical relationships. As Rzewski’s friend and colleague Christian Wolff has observed, “The movement of the whole piece is towards a new unity—an image of popular unity—made up of related but diverse, developing elements (not to be confused with uniformity), coordinated and achieved by a blend of irresistible logic and spontaneous expression” [cited by John Rockwell, *All-American Music*, 86].

Often political, and always imaginative, Rzewski’s pieces show an extremely broad spectrum of musical techniques, from the evocation of folk song in *Four North American Ballads* (1978-79), to the graphic notation of *Le Silence des Espaces Infinis* and *The Price of Oil* (1980), to the twelve-tone writing he used in his operatic treatment of Aeschylus’s *The Persians* (1985). His choice of texts is equally varied, including not only the chamber oratorio *Triumph of Death* (1987) based on Peter Weiss’s retelling of the 1964 Auschwitz Trial and the overtly political choruses *Stop the War!* and *Stop the Testing!* (1995), but also treatments of writings by Shakespeare, and Paul Verlaine. No matter what the subject matter, and no matter how careful the underlying structures, Rzewski’s work projects an intensity and spontaneity of sound that suit his revolutionary spirit.

Although much of Rzewski’s reputation has been made outside the conventional channels of musical prestige, he has nonetheless held many important teaching posts. Since his return to Europe in the late 1970s, he has taught in Rome and at the Liege Conservatory and has been a Composer in Residence at Berlin’s Hochschule der Künste, the Yale School of Music, The Royal Conservatory of The Hague, Mills College, U. C. San Diego, and the California Institute of the Arts, among others. His music has been commissioned and performed by artists from around the world, including Ursula Oppens, Evelyn Glennie, Musique Vivante, the Society for New Music in Basel, the Minneapolis-based Zeitgeist group, California E.A.R. Unit, and the Abel-Steinberg-Winant trio, for whom he wrote *Whangdoodles* in 1997.

### ***Coming Together* (1972)**

*for narrator and any number of instruments*

“I think the combination of age and a greater coming together is responsible for the speed of the passing time. It’s six months now, and I can tell you truthfully, few periods in my life have passed so quickly.” So wrote Sam Melville in a letter from the spring of 1971, a few months before he became an engineer and a victim of the most violent prison riot in American history. From September 9-13, inmates at the Attica Correction Facility staged a coup, taking guards as hostages and drawing media attention to deplorable conditions and injustices within the prison system. When state police and national guardsmen stormed the facility, more than forty people lost their lives.

Rzewski responded to this dramatic episode with two pieces built on texts by leaders of the uprising: *Coming Together* and *Attica*. In *Coming Together*, the text of Melville’s letter emerges gradually, circling back on itself word by word or phrase by phrase. Underneath the narrator’s recitation, an utterly steady instrumental line takes shape from the obsessive iteration of small melodic fragments. The rapid instrumental background and the slowly emerging text seem to

hold one another in check. The dizzying accumulation of cycle upon cycle lends an intensity and sense of struggle to the passage of time that may reflect the prisoners' perceptions (or the slow completion of their sentences). In each of the piece's eight continuous sections, the inflexible "bass" line and the narrator's intonation get a different inflection from their interaction with the other performers. Sometimes their division of labor is prescribed by Rzewski; at other times, it occurs through a process of improvisation. But in both cases the ensemble revels in the exhilarating power of "coming together."

#### **Text for Coming Together**

"I think that the combination of age and a greater coming together is responsible for the speed of the passing time. It's six months now, and I can tell you truthfully, few periods in my life have passed so quickly. I am in excellent physical and emotional health. There are doubtless subtle surprises ahead, but I feel secure and ready. As lovers will contrast their emotions in times of crisis so am I dealing with my environment. In the indifferent brutality, the incessant noise, the experimental chemistry of food, the ravings of lost hysterical men, I can act with clarity and meaning. I am deliberate, sometimes even calculating, seldom employing histrionics except as a test of the reactions of others. I read much, exercise, talk to guards and inmates, feeling for the inevitable direction of my life."

#### Additional Listening

*Canzon Prima* is included on a CD of chamber works by **Ada Gentile** titled *Paesaggi della Mente* (Dischi Ricordi); the version for three clarinets and solo female voice can be found on a disc from Gruppo Musica Aperta (Gruppo Editoriale Tirreno), and *Come dal Nulla* has been recorded on the CD *Nuova Musica per Clarinetto Basso* (Rocci Parisi). *In un silenzio ordinato* appears on the Ensemble Firebird CD *Plot in Fiction: Italian Music for Ensemble* (Metier) and on a disc issued by Lorraine Vaillancourt and Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne (Serie Actuelles). The Paul Klee Quartet has recorded her String Quartet no. 3 (Niccolo), and *Veni Lumen Cordis* for clarinet and orchestra has been recorded by Paolo Lepore and the Orchestra Sinfonica di Bari (Psicoanalisi Contro). A more complete discography can be found at the "Living Composers Project" <<http://composers21.com/compdocs/gentilea.htm>>.

Recordings of **Ivan Fedele**'s music are most easily accessible in the United States through such European websites as <[www.amazon.com.fr](http://www.amazon.com.fr)>, where one can find the Ensemble Accroche Note recording of *Maja* together with *Imaginary Islands* and other works, as well as the Ensemble InterContemporain performances of *Duo en Resonance* and *Richiamo* (Ades). Stradivarius has issued a series of CDs of Fedele's orchestral works and concertos including *Chiari, Epos*, and the Piano Concerto with Bruno Canino and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France under Luca Pfaff; and *Scena, Ruah*, and the Cello Concerto with Pierpaolo Toso and the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI. A more complete discography can be found at the "Living Composers Project" <<http://composers21.com/compdocs/fedelei.htm>>.

The piano music of **Frederic Rzewski** is available in many fine recordings including a box set of the composer playing his own piano works (Nonesuch), and CDs by Lisa Moore (Cantaloupe) and Ursula Oppens (Music & Arts). In addition, Marc-Andre Hamelin (Hyperion), Ursula Oppens (Vanguard), and Stephen Drury (New Albion) have recorded *The People United Will Never Be Defeated*. *Coming Together* can be found in performances by Talujon Percussion and Michael Lowenstern (both for Capstone), among others. *Jefferson* and *Antigone-Legend* appear on the composer's own CRI disc (with Carol Plantamura, vocalist) and the Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio has recorded *Whangdoodles* on a CD for Music & Arts that also includes *To the Earth*, performed by William Winant and Rzewski's own performance of excerpts from *The Road*.

### *The Performers*

Recently hailed by the *Los Angeles Times* as “an exciting soprano on the verge of something big,” **Elissa Johnston** has performed numerous times with the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s New Music Group both in Los Angeles and at the Ojai Festival with conductors Tan Dun, David Zinman, Daniel Harding and Steven Stucky. She made her Lincoln Center debut singing Brahms’s *Liebeslieder Waltzes* with the New York City Ballet and was subsequently invited back to premiere *Morgen!*, a set of orchestral songs by Richard Strauss choreographed by Peter Martins. Johnston has appeared with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, among others, and has been featured at the New York Philharmonic’s Copland Festival and Lincoln Center’s Stravinsky Festival. She has given recitals at the Aldeburgh Festival and the Aspen Festival’s Winter Music Series with composer Ricky Ian Gordon. In Aspen she also sang the role of Pat Nixon in the world premiere of John Adams’s concert suite from *Nixon in China* entitled *The Nixon Tapes*, with the composer conducting. In 2002, Johnston sang the world premiere of Jorge Liderman’s *Song of Songs* with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players for Cal Performances.

**Robert Ernst**, narrator, is a co-founder of The Iowa Theatre Lab, and The Blake St. Hawkeyes. He received Dramalogue awards for Best Director and Best Production for *Tokens*, a musical play about the plague. Ernst holds a place in the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest play after performing fixed and improvised material non-stop for twenty-four hours and one minute. His pocket opera, *The John* was produced at The Intersection for the Arts, where it received a Dean Goodman Award in Performance as well as being chosen for the Best Of The Year series in *The Bay Guardian*. He recently acted in an acclaimed production of William Saroyan’s *Time Of Your Life*, which was sponsored by The Steppenwolf Theatre of Chicago, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and American Conservatory Theater of San Francisco. Ernst has performed on every major Bay Area stage, and at many smaller venues as well as on television and in the movies. He is also a member of the band, Smooth Toad.

Principal clarinetist of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra since 2001, **Carey Bell** has been heard in numerous performances with Bay Area orchestras and chamber ensembles. He is a founding member of Triad, a recently-formed clarinet, cello and piano trio. He has worked with the Eos Ensemble, Composers Inc., Chamber Music San Francisco, the Sierra Chamber Society, and Earplay, among others. He has held previous positions with the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, and his recent summer engagements include the Telluride Chamber Music Festival, the Anchorage Festival of Music, and the Skaneateles Music Festival. He received degrees in clarinet and performance working with such teachers as Fred Ormand, William Bolcom, Michael Daugherty, and Bright Sheng (at the University of Michigan) and Larry Combs (at DePaul University). Bell currently teaches at Stanford University, and he joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 2004.