

San Francisco Contemporary Music Players

Monday, February 18, 2002 at 8 pm

Center for the Arts Forum

BIG BANG

JOHN ZORN

Gris-gris (2000) World Premiere

William Winant, percussion

CINDY COX

World a tuning fork (2001) World Premiere

ROBERT GREENBERG

Funny Like a Monkey (2001) World Premiere

I. Knock Yourself Out

II. Flutterby

III. Morph (with apologies to J. B.)

Aglika Angelova, piano

— INTERMISSION —

IANNIS XENAKIS

Psappha (1975)

Danniel Kennedy, percussion

WAYNE PETERSON

Nonet (2001) World Premiere

I. Autumnal Reflections, *In Memoriam William Banovetz*

II. Desperate Gambol

Tonight's premiere performances of music by Cindy Cox, Robert Greenberg, and Wayne Peterson are made possible in part by a grant from The James Irvine Foundation.

Wayne Peterson's Nonet was commissioned with a grant from the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University, which has also helped to underwrite this premiere performance.

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Performers

Barbara Chaffe, flute

Blair Tindall, oboe

William Wohlmacher, clarinet

David Henderson, alto saxophone

Lawrence Ragent, French horn

Scott Bleaken, percussion (Peterson)

Mark Veregge, percussion (Cox)

Karen Rosenak, piano (Cox)

Thomas Schultz, piano (Peterson)

Roy Malan, violin

Paul Ehrlich, viola

Nina Flyer, cello

Steven D'Amico, contrabass

Paul Hoskins, guest conductor

JOHN ZORN (B. 1953)

John Zorn's creative philosophy relies on collaborative improvisation and stylistic eclecticism—two things that he believes are inevitable in twentieth-century composition. “Whether we like it or not,” he declares, “the era of the composer as an autonomous musical mind has just about come to an end.” Citing such historical precedents as Duke Ellington's reliance on his band members and John Cage's involvement with a close circle of performer-friends, Zorn also observes that the “collaborative aspects of the recording process” have intensified a healthy tendency to view every instance of music making as a group endeavor. This powerful idea resonates with the composer's own background and preferred performance methods: “My music depends on collaborators in a very special way. Most of the people I've been associated with are creative improvisers who have developed highly personalized approaches to their instruments. These sounds defy traditional notation on score paper. We ‘notate’ the music on tape by molding it in the recording studio, as it is happening, as a sculptor would mold clay.”

In explaining his attraction to interactive and stylistically eclectic performance, Zorn remarked: “Improvisation is a true American hybrid music, like rock was a hybrid music.” It is no accident that he has been drawn to music that he considers “hybrid.” In fact, this cultural mixing has strong biographical roots for Zorn. Born and raised in New York City, he learned numerous instruments before settling on the saxophone while he was studying composition at Webster College in St. Louis. His college experience was brief, but it exposed him to the Black Artist Group (BAG) and introduced him to the artistic aims of Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM).

At age twenty-one, after spending time touring the country and living on the West Coast, Zorn returned to New York and became one of the most innovative participants in the flourishing improvisation scene of the city's Lower East Side, where he has worked with such musicians as guitarists Bill Frisell, disk jockey Christian Marclay,

and composer/guitarists Fred Frith and Elliott Sharp. Zorn's first body of compositions emerged from this interactive environment during the seventies. In an attempt to introduce structuring principles into free improvisation, he created what he called “game theory” pieces, in which all the players agree on certain rules, but the possible outcomes are almost infinite. Even the games Zorn has chosen as models span the globe in their associations: alongside such works as *Lacrosse* (1977), *Hockey* (1978), or *Archery* (1979) he has composed *Xu Feng* (1985), which mirrors the fast pace of Kung Fu action films, and *Bezique* (1989), which is based on a French card game popular in the nineteenth century.

In addition to avant-garde jazz and experimental composition, Zorn's ideas come from such sources as hard core rock groups like Napalm Death, from the cartoon music of Carl Stalling (composed for Warner Brothers), and especially from the world of film. In fact, Zorn's first successful album was a series of arrangements based on the movie music of Italian composer Ennio Morricone: *The Big Gundown* (1986). A number of his later works also involve the imaginative rearranging of other composers' scores, but the material Zorn selects to be his framework seems consistently less important than the personalities of the musicians he prefers to work with. As scholar David Bither points out: “It is Zorn's choice of musicians that decides the actual sound of his pieces. In any given performance, blocks of cacophonous free improvising, horror movie themes, bucolic Japanese folk melodies, bebop jazz lines, squealing duck calls, or roaring metal guitars might hurtle past. The effect is like watching a chameleon race through a paint box.”

Beginning in the late eighties, Zorn expanded his oeuvre and working methods to include written scores like the pastiche *Cat O'Nine Tails*, composed for the Kronos Quartet in 1988. In 1992, together with Marc Ribot, Zorn launched a series of projects known as “Masada” or “radical Jewish culture,” intended to highlight Jewish influences in contemporary American culture. Beginning with his *Kristallnacht* (1992-93), which also uses pitch collections taken from Arnold Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron*, Zorn has added Hebrew *Gematria* (numerology) to his catalogue of structuring devices. Later works in the “Masada” movement borrow from

klezmer and Middle Eastern music. Most recently, he has composed his first purely electronic work, *American Magus*, and his first piece of computer music *Codebreaker* (2001), which pay tribute to underground artists Harry Smith and Maya Deren, respectively.

Though most frequently associated with downtown New York, Zorn has spent considerable time living in Tokyo and has toured around the world with his many ensembles, including Golden Palominos, Painkiller, Slan, News for Lulu, Locus Solus, and especially Naked City, with whom he recorded some of his most famous music. While continuing to compose and perform, he also manages the avant-garde record label Tzadik. Most of Zorn's music is available only on recording, but he has also received commissions for written scores from such prestigious groups as the Brooklyn Philharmonic and the New York Philharmonic, for whom he wrote his *Orchestral Variations: Leonard Bernstein in Memoriam*. In 1997, the Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio premiered his *Music for Children* (1996) at the Salzburg Festival; they gave the United States premiere on the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players concert series in spring, 1998.

***Gris-gris* (2000)**

for solo percussion

Like Zorn's *Étant Donnés* (69 paroxysms for Marcel Duchamp), the percussion solo *Gris-gris* was partly inspired by the visual arts, in this case, by the painter Juan Gris (1887-1927), who, along with Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, is considered one of the founders of cubism. The angular lines and collage techniques of Gris's canvases find parallels in Zorn's music—although in this piece the collage effects of the composer's radical eclecticism have given way to experimentation within a narrower range of sound sources: the drum family (three bass drums, five tom toms, three snare drums, and three bongos). Even though these drums represent a single instrumental type, they offer a wide range of registers and timbres, giving the audience a chance to perceive changing patterns as the piece unfolds.

Gris-gris is virtuosic, sectional, and dramatic. It begins with patterned rhythmic drumming before disintegrating into a more mercurial interplay of textures and building to a final climax. This intensely demanding solo was written for and dedicated to William Winant, who has worked with Zorn on numerous occasions and contributed to the conception of the piece. Like many of the works Zorn has composed for particular performers or ensembles, this one grows out of the composer's intimate familiarity with Winant's unique playing style. Partly for this reason, even though *Gris-gris* contains no improvisation (the score is fully notated), it still captures the spontaneity so characteristic of Zorn's collaborative music.

CINDY COX (B. 1961)

Born in Houston, Cindy Cox received her undergraduate degree in piano performance as a Nordan Fine Arts Scholar at Texas Christian University. From there, she traveled to Indiana University for graduate work in composition, receiving her doctorate in 1992. Her principal teachers were Lili Kraus (piano), Harvey Sollberger, Eugene O'Brien, John Harbison, and Donald Erb. Cox has remained active in both composition and performance since joining the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, where she is an Associate Professor in composition. She has performed extensively with contemporary music ensembles and has premiered many new works for solo piano.

Cox's music ranges from the intimate to the extroverted, and her works are widely respected for their intelligence and numinous sensibility. Bay Area audiences have had the opportunity to hear her works in a wide variety of settings. In 1994, CNMAT presented an evening of her interactive works involving live performers and electronics, and in June 2001, her music was featured by the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players as part of the TEMPO festival. Among Cox's recent compositions are the dazzling elegy for string quartet *Columba Aspexit*, which incorporates a twelfth-century chant by Hildegard von Bingen, and the solo piano piece *The black-bird whistling/Or just after*, commissioned by Sarah Cahill.

Cox has received awards and commissions from organizations such as the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Fromm Foundation, and ASCAP. She has held Fellowships at the Tanglewood Music Center, the Aspen Music Festival, the MacDowell Colony, and the Civitella Ranieri Foundation in Italy. In 1992, her large chamber work *Sonnets to Orpheus* made her a finalist in the 1992 ALEA III International Composition Competition. The following year, the Women's Philharmonic played her prize-winning *Cathedral Spires*, which won the first National Commissioning Competition for Younger Women Composers. Recent performances include those by the Kronos Quartet, the National Symphony, the Oakland Symphony, the Alexander String Quartet, the Paul Dresher Ensemble, EARPLAY, the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, who premiered her *Piece in Two Halves* in 1993.

World a tuning fork (2001)

for amplified alto saxophone, contrabass, percussion, piano, and tape

World a tuning fork is based upon two lines from a poem by John Campion: "World a tuning fork / lift-up-over sounding." According to the composer, "The lines refer to the living, canopied sound world in the Amazon rain forest. I imagined this vision generalized to the entire living world, an earth turning on its axis like a tuning fork, vibrating with the musics of every location. My composition was inspired by this conception of resonant space."

Cox continues, "I created a pitch collection based upon the overtone series of the contrabass's open strings (E, A, D, and G), and used the piano's sostenuto pedal to capture the lowest octave as a resonator which rings throughout. The ensemble is amplified to maximize this effect. The musical material alternates between large expressive soliloquies played by the alto saxophone and supported by the piano, and a cyclical set of repetitions played by the quartet and punctuated by low frequencies reiterated by the piano."

World a tuning fork was written for the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and is dedicated to John Campion.

ROBERT GREENBERG (B. 1954)

Born in Brooklyn, Robert Greenberg did his undergraduate work at Princeton University with Edward Cone and Claudio Spies before enrolling at the University of California, Berkeley, where he received a doctorate in 1984. His principal teachers were Andrew Imbrie, Olly Wilson, and Richard Felciano. Since that time, Greenberg has established himself as a faculty member at the San Francisco Conservatory and as a respected composer and lecturer nationwide.

Greenberg has composed over forty works for a wide variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles. The piece we will hear tonight, *Funny Like a Monkey*, is the latest in a series of works inspired by attitudes and actions of family members. In 1988, he wrote *Child's Play* for string quartet, which captures the imaginative and playful energy of his daughter Rachel (then two years old). His solo piano work *Dude 'Tudes* (1991) attempts to transfer into sound some of the many moods and activities of his 22-month old son Samuel Mark Greenberg, with movements such as "Orneriness," "Building Blocks," and "Dreams of Play." Outside this domestic sphere, Greenberg's works encompass the full spectrum of characters and emotions—from the delicate counterpoint of his quartet *Breaths, Voices and Cadenza* (1981) to the explosive energy of *In Shape* (1990) for two pianos and marimba. Greenberg's *It Don't Mean a Thing* (1990) for percussion sextet, combines the sounds and style of Japanese Taiko drumming with the rhythmic swing of Duke Ellington. The result is what the composer calls "a certain cultural schizophrenia" that might be considered a tribute to the ethnic and sonic diversity of the Bay Area.

Greenberg's honors and awards include commissions from the Koussevitzky Foundation of the Library of Congress, the Alexander String Quartet, the Dancers' Stage Ballet Company, XTET, the Ark Foundation, and the Santa Cruz New Music Guild. His works have been performed around the world—from New York to Los Angeles and from Greece to The Netherlands, where his string quartet *Child's Play* was performed at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw.

At the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Greenberg served for twelve years as Chair of the Department of Music History and Literature and Director of Curriculum of the Adult Extension Division. Well known as a public speaker, he is a regular music commentator for National Public Radio's "Weekend All Things Considered." He is co-creator and lecturer for the San Francisco Symphony's "Discovery Series," and he has also contributed 288 lectures to the acclaimed Teaching Company/Superstar Teachers Program of Virginia, providing insights into an impressive variety of musical topics. He is currently an artistic co-director and Board Member of Composers, Inc.

***Funny Like a Monkey* (2001)**

for violin, viola, cello, and piano

The composer writes: "*Funny Like a Monkey* is one of the many phrases coined by my 15 year-old daughter in order to address the actions and well-meant (but clueless) attempts at humor by both her younger brother and her hopelessly antiquated father. What I love about these phrases—of which 'funny like a monkey' is a favorite—is their use of nonsequitur elevated to high verbal art: they are at once biting and humorous and filled with a sort of over-the-top verbal exuberance and bravado that only a teenager, as the self-acknowledged epitome of hip, can get away with.

"Though *Funny Like a Monkey* is scored as a traditional piano quartet, it is in reality composed for string trio PLUS piano. Along with being part of the larger ensemble, the piano has a featured role in the piece: it is narrator, commentator, curmudgeon, critic, and emcee, as it introduces, and comments upon, the relative merits of the three movements that comprise the work.

"The first movement is entitled 'Knock Yourself Out.' The movement's energy and exuberance, as well as its mercurial shift-on-a-dime nature are a rather personal reference to the dedicatee.

"The second movement is entitled 'Flutterby.' A spoonerism created (or at least favored) by my daughter, the reference is to a sort of

macro-butterfly, a 'mega-mariposa,' if you will, one of extraordinary beauty and delicacy that floats and drifts and shimmers in some imagined place.

"The third movement, 'Morph, With Apologies to J. B.' refers to the rather obvious fact that the music keeps morphing in and out of the finale of Johannes Brahms's (J. B.'s) Piano Quartet in G Minor, Op. 25. I'm crazy about Brahms's piano quartets, and I have surrendered to the urge to mess with his pitch collections and thematic motives. With apologies to J. B. indeed. The movement, with its musical puns, metamorphoses, and attempts at humor, is a perfect example of what might be referred to as 'funny like a monkey.'

"My only regret is that I did not have the opportunity to set Rachel's newest phrase to music, 'Mama Pajama.' Next time.

"*Funny Like a Monkey* is dedicated, with love, to Rachel Amy Greenberg on the occasion of her 16th birthday."

IANNIS XENAKIS (1922-2001)

Almost exactly one year ago, shortly after the death of Iannis Xenakis, Paul Griffiths paid tribute to the composer in the *New York Times*, commenting that his music retained a "primitive power" despite its origin in "highly sophisticated scientific and mathematical theories." This unusual juxtaposition—of the very old and very new, of the very basic and the highly refined—is crucial to understanding Xenakis's music and his influential theories about mathematics and composition.

As the composer's student James Harley has observed, Xenakis's early life was removed from the compositional trends of Western Europe. He grew up in Romania and Greece, he was fascinated by the ancient Greek classics of literature and philosophy, and his formal education was devoted primarily to mathematics and engineering rather than music (although he had received rudimentary vocal training in high school in Athens and occasional piano lessons while a young adult.) This threefold distance—in space, time, and training—had a profound impact on his career, for while he was in a

sense isolated, he developed strikingly original methods of musical creation. While fighting with the Greek resistance during World War II, Xenakis was wounded, captured, and sentenced to death. With the end of the conflict, he escaped to France. His death sentence was revoked in 1951, and he became a French citizen in 1965. Throughout his life, however, he retained strong ties to the culture of his homeland and to the political ideals that had forced him into exile.

Shortly after arriving in Paris, Xenakis found a job working for the architecture studio of Le Corbusier. He was deeply involved in designing the Philips Pavilion, which would become the spatial home for Edgard Varèse's pioneering composition for tape, *Poème électronique*. Though Xenakis's claim to have engineered the building singlehandedly remains questionable, there is no question about the originality of the music he created during his years with Le Corbusier. During this time, he worked to refine his compositional skills. Though Nadia Boulanger turned him down as a pupil, he received guidance from composer Arthur Honegger and Annette Dieudonné, a professor at the Paris Conservatoire. Dieudonné quickly sensed that Xenakis had little interest in traditional harmony and sent him to study with Olivier Messiaen and Darius Milhaud, whose open-minded approaches to pitch organization inspired him to explore parallels between music and architecture.

This experimentation bore fruit in his first major orchestral work, *Metastasis* (1953-54), which took even the avant-garde by surprise when it was premiered at the 1955 Donaueschingen festival of contemporary music. As Xenakis revealed in conversation with critic and publisher Bálint András Varga, "In the Philips pavilion I realized the basic ideas of *Metastasis*: as in the music, here too I was interested in the question of whether it is possible to get from one point to another without breaking the continuity. In *Metastasis* this problem led to glissandos, while in the pavilion it resulted in the hyperbolic parabola shapes." The abstraction of *Metastasis*, in which specific pitches are replaced by sonic shapes, reached an even greater extreme in *Pithoprakta* (1955-56) which took theories about the movement of gases and applied them to music, resulting in "clouds of sound": continuously changing conglomerations of

tiny sound-events, such as the plucking of a stringed instrument.

Implicit in *Pithoprakta* was a conjunction between music and mathematics that grew more and more technical through Xenakis's career. He codified his ideas under the rubric "stochastic music," a term that invokes probability theory and encompasses "the law of large numbers," "the laws of rare events," and "different aleatory procedures." His fascinating but technical writings, many of which are collected in *Formalized Music* (1963, rev. 1992), reveal the depth of his engagement with the sciences. Intuitively drawn toward natural sounds that are both complex and unpredictable (thunder, wind moving through grass, insect noises), Xenakis began to experiment with the synthetic creation of similar types of sounds. Underlying this fascination was a desire to escape the determinism of serial or twelve-tone music without abandoning its scientific rigor. "I have tried to inject determinism into chance," he once observed.

As electronic technology improved, computers became a natural and perhaps an indispensable tool for Xenakis. Beginning with *Achorripsis* of 1956-57, he used computer programs to link certain musical parameters (timbre, duration, intensity, etc.) with mathematical operations derived from calculus and game theory. By separating non-temporal parameters (like pitch) from temporal ones (like rhythm) in his calculations, Xenakis achieved extremely intricate constructions in pieces like his sextet *Eonta* for piano and brass (1963-64), *Nomos Alpha* (1965-66) for cello, or *Tetras* (1983), dedicated to the Arditti String Quartet.

Xenakis viewed composition as an endeavor based on rules and variables. The moral and aesthetic force of this stance are summed up in his declaration: "This is my definition of an artist, or of a man: to control." Such a statement makes clear the distance Xenakis placed between expression and composition: "...that kind of traditional sentimental effusion of sadness, gaiety or joy," he wrote, "I don't think that this is really admissible in my music." Yet this ostensibly anti-expressive philosophy has roots in Xenakis's personal history and his sense of metaphysics. In connecting his musical style to his wartime experiences, to "the agony of my youth, of the resistance," Xenakis has acknowledged his own desire for the transcendent: "For years I

was tormented by guilt at having left the country for which I'd fought. I left my friends.... I felt I had a mission. I had to do something to regain the right to live. It wasn't just a question of music—it was something much more significant. So my thoughts were also moving around more general, universal problems. I became convinced—and I remain so even today—that one can achieve universality, not through religion, not through emotions or tradition, but through the sciences. Through a scientific way of thinking. But even with that, one can get nowhere without general ideas, points of departure.... These ideas are born of intuition, some kind of vision.”

***Psappha* (1975)**

for solo percussion

A keen interest in articulations led Xenakis to write many percussion pieces, beginning with one of his first large-scale compositions, *Terretektorh* (1966) and ending with his very last work for ensemble, *O-mega* (1997). Some of these pieces reflect an interest in African drumming. Others, like *Psappha*, respond to the layered rhythms of Indian music: “I studied Indian percussion music a long time ago—not to imitate it but to understand the underlying principle, these shifts of rhythm which produce a multi-layered system even on a single instrument. In *Psappha*, for instance, the accents produce several layers of rhythmic patterns, superimposed one on another, all with just one performer. Of course, it's quite a challenge for the percussionist.” Indeed, the difficulties facing *Psappha*'s soloist are formidable: manipulating as many as sixteen different instruments and coordinating at least three distinct metric schemes based on notation that can require up to nine different musical staves.

Though Xenakis spoke of *Psappha* in terms of “durational axes,” “Abelian (commutative) group structure,” and “temporal algebra,” it is possible to appreciate the piece in other, less technical ways as well. Its two unequal sections are audibly distinct; in the first part, only instruments made of skins or wood are allowed to speak, while in the second part metallic sounds join the timbral mix. Since each instrumental family is divided into high, medium, and low registers, and since each of these subgroups operates according to its own rhythmic principles, listeners are treated to a polyrhythmic mosaic of

tone colors.

Psappha's rhythmic patterns are based on elaborate systems of permutations involving mathematical sieve theory (named for the Sieve of Eratosthenes used to derive the prime numbers). As the work's title suggests, however, its rhythmic influences are not solely mathematical. Xenakis also adopted the principle of metric variation through extension (metabole) that characterizes the poetry of Sappho. In fact, his fascination with the Greek poetess predated any of his computational experiments—while he was still fighting with the Resistance, he wrote melodies for some of her poems. In *Psappha*, however, these lyrical experiments are replaced by rhythmic pulsation and temporal flux.

Psappha was commissioned by the English Bach Festival in cooperation with the Gulbekian Foundation. It is dedicated to Sylvio Gualda, who premiered the work in London, in May 1976.

WAYNE PETERSON (B. 1927)

Wayne Peterson has had a long and productive relationship with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players since 1975, when the Players premiered his *Diatribes* for violin and piano. Since that time, the ensemble has performed nine of his other compositions, including the world premieres of *An Interrupted Serenade*, for flute cello and harp (1979) and *Ariadne's Thread*, for harp and six instruments (1991). In 1997, the Contemporary Music Players celebrated Peterson's seventieth birthday with a performance of *Vicissitudes* (1995) that won widespread praise. Tonight, the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer contributes his rhythmic energy and melodic gifts to a work commemorating William Banovetz, oboist and long-time member of the SFCMP.

Peterson has always enjoyed a special rapport with performers. As composer Hayes Biggs recently remarked, “One usually feels, when listening to one of Peterson's works, that the composer welcomes the opportunity and challenge of exploring the possibilities of whatever medium is occupying him at the moment. It is also impossible not to feel his immense respect for excellent performers as well as his joy at

creating individual parts that will be eminently rewarding to play.” This sensitivity to the performer’s perspective may spring from Peterson’s early experiences as a jazz pianist or from his many years of fruitful interaction with the Bay Area’s contemporary music ensembles.

Growing up in Minnesota, Peterson quickly displayed his aptitude for the piano and his interest in jazz. At an early age, he played professionally with his uncle’s dance band and began making his own jazz arrangements. His years at the University of Minnesota balanced this practical experience with exposure to twentieth century classical music and formal training in composition. After studying at London’s Royal Academy of Music on a Fulbright Scholarship (1953-54), Peterson returned to the States and gained his first major success with *Free Variations*, which was premiered by the Minnesota Symphony Orchestra in 1958 under Antal Doráti, who continued to champion the work at home and abroad. Having achieved national recognition, Peterson was invited to join the faculty of San Francisco State University in 1960, where he is still an inspirational presence.

Not surprisingly, a number of Peterson’s compositions reflect his love of jazz. Sometimes this influence can be quite direct, for example, in the string quartet *Jazz Play*, which he calls “a fond reminiscence of my days as a pianist during the Bebop Era.” More often, one is aware of subtler traces of jazz in Peterson’s rhythmic language. As Biggs puts it, “His music is marked by a wonderful rhythmic fluidity.... Peterson is not afraid of an audible pulse.... [which] in combination with the layering of different pulses and the artful changing of the basic pulse unit, as well subtly displaced accents, creates the effect of a constantly and tantalizingly fluctuating sense of tempo.”

Melodically, Peterson’s scores reflect the diversity of his experiences as performer and listener. Though deeply engaged with twelve-tone composition at times during his career, he has always been open to a wide range of musical techniques and idioms. In his 1972 duo for flute and piano, *Capriccio*, he employs a variety of extended performance techniques including haunting microtonal slides for the flute (reminiscent of Japanese shakuhachi playing) and plucking or striking the piano strings (a practice with roots in the American experimental

tradition of Henry Cowell and John Cage). Peterson’s masterful Sextet (1982)—written for the Contemporary Music Players and dedicated to Marcella DeCray and Jean-Louis Le Roux—evokes the agitated melodic disjunctions and kaleidoscopic motivic development of serial composition without forsaking an expressive use of rhythm and timbre. A rhapsodic and almost improvisatory freedom characterizes his first String Quartet (1983), while his orchestral score *The Face of the Night, the Heart of the Dark*, which was commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony and awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1992, relies on an idiom which the composer has called “chromatic” and “difficult.”

Peterson remains one of the most distinguished and productive composers in the Bay Area. Among his recent works are *Antiphonies* for solo percussion, *Diptych* (commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation for EARPLAY), *Vicissitudes* (written for the twentieth anniversary of the New York New Music Ensemble), *Peregrinations* for solo clarinet, *Monarch of the Vine* for percussion quartet, String Quartet #2 (commissioned by the Gerbode Foundation), and *Pop Sweet* for the Alexander String Quartet. Over the course of his career, Peterson has completed commissions from the Guggenheim, Fromm, and Djerassi Foundations as well as the American Composers Orchestra. Among the many groups that have featured his compositions are the San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, and Minnesota Symphonies, the Group for Contemporary Music, Speculum Musicae, the Washington Square Players, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, and the Cleveland Chamber Orchestra. Peterson has been honored by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and in 1990, he was a Visiting Artist at the American Academy in Rome. In addition to his teaching at San Francisco State, Peterson served as Guest Professor of Composition at Stanford from 1992-94.

Nonet (2001)

for flute/alto flute/piccolo, oboe, clarinet/bass clarinet, horn, percussion, piano, violin, viola, and cello

Peterson writes: “In response to a commission by the Fromm Music Foundation, Nonet was written for the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players (September 2001). There are two movements: ‘Autumnal Reflections’ and ‘Desperate Gambol.’ The former is

dedicated to the memory of William Banovetz, a long time member of the ensemble whose superb oboe playing was an inspiration to us all.

“‘Autumnal Reflections’ begins with an arching, lyric melody in the oboe whose motifs foreshadow much that follows. The accompaniment, initially light and fragmentary, becomes more flowing and sustained as the oboe descends, merging into a concluding, broadening phrase played by the horn. An agitated elaboration of these ideas now occurs in the violin, momentarily interrupted by playful triplet figures in the winds and resumed in the lower register by the cello. The strings then unite to present a sonorous chorale, enclosed from above and below by a dialogue between the oboe and bass clarinet. As the tempo quickens, a variety of shifting textures intensify and culminate in a high, anguished tutti statement based on the original oboe motifs. A soft, murmuring passage follows, setting the stage for a brief recapitulation of material originally stated by the horn. In conclusion, the entire ensemble gently ascends to the upper register where tolling bells make a somber parting reference to the beginning.

“‘Desperate Gambol’ has the feel of a manic scherzo, although its form does not cohere to any such preconceived pattern. Here the prominent melodic material of the first movement is supplemented by a number of rhythmic motifs whose syncopations have their origins in jazz and are suggestive of a frenetic dance. Beginning in a tentative, somewhat mysterious manner, small individual gestures gradually coalesce and acquire clear direction. Their rapid change of register and orchestration frequently produces a kaleidoscopic effect which becomes increasingly agitated as the movement progresses. While momentary relief is obtained by sustained passages of a more static nature, ‘Desperate Gambol’ is dominated by an overall thrust of gathering tension which is finally released in a closing, brilliant climax.”

—*Program notes by Beth Levy*

Featured Performers

Originally hailing from Bulgaria, pianist **Aglika Angelova** received her musical training at the Music Schools in Varna and Sofia, graduating with honors in 1991. During this time, she won numerous prizes in national competitions and gave many solo and chamber music recitals, including appearances and recordings for the Bulgarian National Television and Radio broadcasts. In 1997, she received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Hamburg Academy of Music where she studied under the eminent pianist and pedagogue, Volker Banfield. During her years in Germany, Angelova served as vocal coach for the Hamburg Academy, was Musical Director of the Bremen State Theater’s production of Berthold Brecht’s *Rein. Sachlich. Böse*, and intensified her performing career, winning First Prize in the Maritim Musikpreis’ Instrumentalist Competition, First Prize in the Elise Meyer Piano competition, and the Accompanist’s Special Prize in the Mendelssohn Cello Competition. She has appeared as soloist in Berlin, Magdeburg, and Palo Alto, and has been Artist in Residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada, the Olympic Music Festival in Washington, and the Moab Music Festival in Utah. Currently living in San Francisco, Angelova is on the faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory and continues to be an active recitalist, chamber musician, and passionate performer of contemporary music.

Daniel Kennedy, percussionist, has been performing with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players since 1993. He holds a master’s degree from California Institute of the Arts, and a doctoral degree from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He has been the founding member of several contemporary music ensembles, including the California E.A.R. Unit, Tabla Rasa, and the Talujon Percussion Quartet, and has performed throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. In addition to extensive solo work, he has performed with the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, the Group for Contemporary Music, the New York New Music Ensemble, the New Jersey Percussion Ensemble, the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players, EARPLAY, the Emphyrean Ensemble, and Music Now. He has also

appeared at such festivals as Cape May, Bang on a Can, Monadnock, Cabrillo, Mertens Contemporary Composer's Festival, Holland-America Festival, and the American Dance Festival. Kennedy has recorded extensively, including collaborations with such artists as Tod Machover, David Starobin, Fred Sherry, Harvey Sollberger, Charles Wuorinen, Paul Hillier and Dennis Russell Davies. While he specializes in twentieth-century music, he has also explored and performed the music of cultures from around the world, including India, the Middle East, and Indonesia. He is currently on the faculty at California State University, Sacramento, where he is Instructor of Percussion and Artistic Director of the Festival of New American Music.

William Winant has collaborated with a diverse range of musicians, including John Cage, Iannis Xenakis, Frederic Rzewski, Anthony Braxton, Alvin Curran, Terry Riley, Cecil Taylor, Steve Reich and Musicians, Yo-Yo Ma, and the Kronos Quartet. He has recorded and toured with Mr. Bungle (*Disco Volante* on Warner Bros. Records), as well as with John Zorn, Oingo Boingo, and Thurston Moore (of Sonic Youth). He has made over ninety recordings, covering a wide variety of genres, including his recording of Lou Harrison's *La Koro Sutro* (New Albion), which was the *New York Times* Critics Choice for best contemporary recording of 1988—the same year that he officially joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. Winant has performed as a soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under the direction of Pierre Boulez, the San Francisco Symphony, the Berkeley Symphony, and the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, as well as many major festivals and recitals throughout the world. He teaches at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and is Artist-in-Residence at Mills College with the internationally recognized Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio, which has commissioned over twenty-five new works for violin, piano and percussion.

Guest Conductor

Paul Hoskins is one of the most versatile young British conductors. Although best known for his work in the dance world and in contemporary music, he also has a successful career in the concert hall, recording for the BBC, and in opera (working for Opera Factory and the Glyndebourne Festival Opera, among others). He has appeared as a guest conductor with BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Ulster Orchestra, English Sinfonia, Royal Ballet Sinfonia, BBC Concert Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and the Orchestra of the Liceu in Barcelona.

Hoskins studied at Cambridge, the Royal College of Music, at Dartington, and in Siena. In July 1996 he became Music Director of Rambert Dance Company, with whom he has conducted all over Europe. With Rambert and London Musici Hoskins opened the newly rebuilt Sadler's Wells Theatre, where he has since conducted on live television. From 1992-98 he was Principal Conductor of Cambridge New Music Players, and with them he gave many premieres at major festivals and London's South Bank Centre.

The range of Hoskins's work is well illustrated by his activities in 2001: acclaimed performances of Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* with London Musici and the New London Chamber Choir; debuts with the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, with New York City Ballet at Lincoln Center, and with San Francisco Ballet; Friday Night is Music Night with the BBC Concert Orchestra; concerts with English Sinfonia; and a Children's Classic Concert with Atarah Ben-Tovim and the National Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican; he also assisted Sakari Oramo with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra production of *Peter Grimes*. In 2002, he makes a return visit to San Francisco Ballet and Covent Garden, as well as his debut appearance with Ensemble Modern in Frankfurt and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

The Ensemble

The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, now in its thirty-first year, is a leader among ensembles in the United States dedicated to contemporary chamber music. A seven-time winner of the prestigious national ASCAP/Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music, SFCMP has performed over 940 new works, including 39 U.S. and 101 world premieres, and has brought sixty-one new pieces into the repertoire through its active commissioning efforts. The instrumentalists who make up the Players are recognized virtuosos in new music performance. Each season the ensemble performs a six-concert series at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. SFCMP has also toured widely throughout California, with performances on such concert series as San Francisco Performances, Cal Performances, the Stern Grove Festival, the Other Minds Festival, Los Angeles' Monday Evening Concerts, the Ojai Festival, and the Festival of New American Music in Sacramento. SFCMP made its European debut at the Cheltenham Festival of Music in 1986 and its East Coast debut at the Library of Congress in 2001. The ensemble has recorded seven albums of its own and contributed recordings to eight others. Its innovative education programs for students at San Francisco's School of the Arts and Lowell High School include performance/presentations and master classes.

Where to Find It

Among the numerous recordings issued by **John Zorn**, listeners might enjoy *Spillane*, *The Naked City*, or *The Big Gundown*: *John Zorn Plays the Music of Ennio Morricone* (Elektra Nonesuch). The Kronos Quartet performs his *Cat O'Nine Tails* on their disc *Short Stories*, which also contains works by Elliott Sharp, Henry Cowell, Steven Mackey, and Sofia Gubaidulina, among others (Elektra Entertainment). Some of the composer's game theory pieces are available in the lavish boxed set *John Zorn: The Parachute Years, 1977-1980* (Tzadik). Zorn's *Étant Donnés (69 paroxysms for Marcel Duchamp)* can be found on the album *Duras: Duchamp*, and some of his "masada" works are included on *The Circle Maker* (Tzadik). Many other selections of Zorn's music are available online at www.tzadik.com.

CRI has just released a compact disc of **Cindy Cox**'s chamber music including *Geode*, *Columba aspexit*, and *Into the Wild*, recorded by EARPLAY, the Alexander String Quartet, and the Paul Drescher Ensemble, as well as her *Primary Colors*, featuring Peter Joseff (clarinet), Karen Bentley (violin), and Karen Rosenak (piano). Cox's own performance of *Four Studies of Light and Dark* can be heard on the album *Extended Resources*, vol. 6 (Capstone). *Coriolis*, for brass and piano, is available on the Mark label, and a recording of *Hysteria*, for trombone and live electronics is forthcoming.

Robert Greenberg's string quartet *Child's Play* has been recorded by the Alexander String Quartet on their album *Sur Pointe* (Innova).

Among the many recordings of the percussion music of **Iannis Xenakis** are two performances of *Psappha*, both by Gert Mortensen, one on a disc with the Kroumata Percussion Ensemble's rendering of *Pléiades*. Ensemble Xenakis USA under Charles Zacharie Bornstein has released a disc containing *Waarg*, *Charisma*, *Analogiques A + B*, *Thallein*, *Herma*, and *Palimpsest*, as well as the interesting collection *Xenakis Live in New York*, which includes a live interview with the composer,

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