



Performers

Stacey Pelinka, flute, piccolo
 Carey Bell, clarinet, bass clarinet
 Peter Josheff, clarinet
 Deborah Shidler, oboe, English horn
 Rufus Olivier, bassoon
 Lawrence Ragent, horn
 Jeff Biancalana, trumpet, piccolo trumpet
 Hall Goff, trombone
 Julie Steinberg, piano
 Teresa McCollough, keyboard
 Chryssie Nanou, keyboard
 Michael Seth Orland, keyboard
 Betty Woo, keyboard
 Roy Malan, violin
 Stephen Harrison, cello
 Richard Worn, contrabass
 Florian Conzetti, percussion



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SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS

David Milnes, Music Director

Monday, 12 December 2005 8 pm
 Herbst Theatre, War Memorial Veterans Building

DAZZLING NEW MUSIC FROM FRANCE

FRANÇOIS PARIS

*12 préludes pour quatre pianos imaginaires
 (12 preludes for four imaginary pianos) (1995)*

United States Premiere

PASCAL DUSAPIN

Cascando (1997)

~ INTERMISSION ~

PHILIPPE HUREL

*Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey (1999)
 (in four movements)*

Julie Steinberg, piano William Winant, percussion

PHILIPPE LEROUX

VOI(REX) (2002)

United States premiere

Donatienne Michel-Dansac, soprano

Introduction

I. L'invisible debout (The standing invisible)

II. Jusque (Until)

III. De part [...] En part (Through [...] and through)

IV. Devant tout autour (In front of everything all around)

V. L'inachevé à son faite (The unfinished at its summit)

FRANÇOIS PARIS (B. 1961)

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 creative, farsighted support of the arts.

Since the influential postwar activities of Olivier Messiaen in the late 1940s, and continuing into the 1950s with Pierre Schaeffer's experiments in electronic music and the pathbreaking works of Pierre Boulez, a French avant-garde has examined, more or less systematically, new spiritual and technological approaches to sound. The 1970s saw the creation of the prestigious Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM), founded by Boulez and funded by the French government. At the same time, Gérard Grisey, together with Tristan Murail and others (sometimes known as the "Spectral" school), launched the group L'Itineraire, devoted to creative investigation of the physical aspects of sound production. This concert celebrates recent works from France, written by the generation who came to maturity just after Grisey, sometimes under his tutelage, sometimes independently, but always in a musical milieu that valued explorations in time and timbre, homage and innovation. These preoccupations are central to the aesthetic decisions of François Paris, the youngest of the four composers featured on tonight's program and a man known for his flexible relation to tradition and his easy embrace of twentieth-century developments in the arts.

Paris was trained in orchestration and composition at the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied with Ivo Malec, Betsy Jolas, and Grisey and became a proficient conductor, able to lead performances of his own music for Radio France and for the new music courses at Darmstadt. His earliest music shows both his French harmonic inheritance and the dramatic approach that would come to characterize his later works. The cello solo *Roque (Castling)* (1990), for example, takes its title from Milan Kundera's thoughts on chess, in *L'immortalité*, and its substance from an intense collaboration with cellist Florian Lauridon. Its harmonic language is fully in keeping with the "Spectral" school, giving special emphasis to the pitches that sound as part of the overtone series when the cellist plays one of its open strings. The melodic and rhythmic language of *Roque*, however, suggests a special attention to the act of performance. Paris notes, "A

work for solo instrument very often implies a certain ‘violence of writing’ in the sense that all energies are concentrated on one and only one point.” This single source should bring into existence every aspect of the music: “the unsaid, the reflections, the extensions imagined or derived from the instrumental gestures, the shadow of the soloist.” The collaborative implications of *Roque* found further expression in *Lecture d’une vague* (*Reading of a Wave*) (1992), inspired by Italo Calvino’s novel *Mr. Palomar*. Here, the composer specifies that the solo flutist should “ground” herself in a pre-recorded mix of five other flutes; likewise, the sound engineer may be considered “fully an interpreter in his own right” as he helps realize the work with the particular electronic media at his disposal.

Paris conceived *Lecture d’une vague* as the prelude to a larger cycle of pieces, *les champs de l’ombre blanche* (*The Fields of the White Shadow*). As such, it hints at one of the more striking facets of the composer’s method: a tendency to build new works quite literally on the basis of older ones. Sometimes this takes the shape through revisions so pervasive that the “revised” piece is really a new creation. The septet *Sur la nuque de la mer étoilée* (*On the Nape of the Starry Sea*) was originally finished in 1994 but completely reworked in 2002-03 to take account of what Paris calls “new possibilities created in part by the evolution in my own musical language and in part . . . by recent technological developments,” specifically those associated with “contextual synthesis,” in which the nuances of live performance help trigger and shape the unfolding electronic components. A more complicated relationship exists among Paris’s 1998 cello concerto *L’empreinte du cygne* (*The Impression of the Swan*), his violin solo *Sombra* (*Shade*) of 1999, and his quartet *Soleado* (*Sunny*), written the following year and dedicated to Philippe and Emmanuelle Leroux. Just as *Sombra* represented “an attempt at deepening the questions posed by the [cello concerto],” so *Soleado* presented “another side” of *Sombra*. More specifically, he writes: “Between the shadow and the light, one may find two visions of the same material, the same harmonic environment, common rhythmic elements and manners of development. The two works, in fact, have but little relationship to one another because the context (or the light) in which their common elements are presented is so radically different.”

Literal collaboration between artists and figurative “collaboration” between creation and tradition remain hallmarks of Paris’s output. His 2004 *Drei Handspiele* (*Three Hand-games*) for six a capella voices interweaves a lullaby, Louis Armstrong’s “What a Wonderful World,” and gestures drawn from a variant of the classic “rock-paper-scissors” game of chance. Still more recently, he completed a score for Jean Vigo’s 1929 silent film *A propos de Nice* and, between these undertakings, he found time to initiate a large-scale project involving music and dance, co-sponsored by CIRM (National Center for Musical Creation) and Les Percussions de Strasbourg and scheduled for a complete premiere in May 2007. According to the composer, the percussion sextet *Senza* (*Without*) represents both the beginning of this new cycle and a continuation of the long-standing interest in “anamorphosis” (sonic metamorphosis through various processes of artful distortion) that also characterize his *12 préludes pour quatre pianos imaginaires*.

Paris gained European fame in 1993, when he won a “triple crown” of sorts: a prize (awarded by Luciano Berio) at the International Competition of Besançon, a commission from IRCAM, and a residency (sponsored by the French Academy in Rome) at the Villa Medici, where he remained until 1995. In 1999, he received a prize from the French Association for Artistic Action’s program “Villa Medici and Beyond,” and two years later, he won the Claude Arrieu prize from SACEM (Society of Authors, Composers, and Music Editors), the French organization in charge of copyright and royalties. Paris has received commissions from Itinéraire, Radio-France, Nuova Arca, and the French government and was the director of music in Sarcelles for three years. In 2004, he became a Professor at Capital Normal University in Beijing, while continuing to direct CIRM in Nice and their annual festival MANCA (New Music Nice/Côte d’Azur).

12 préludes pour quatre pianos imaginaires *(12 Preludes for Four Imaginary Pianos) (1995)* *for four digitally sampled pianos*

The composer writes, “These twelve preludes were written for imagi-

nary pianos. By ‘imaginary piano,’ I mean that each prelude presents a different configuration of temperaments/tunings and that the technological means set up to realize this configuration require the use of an ‘electronic imitation’ of the piano’s timbre [tone color]. Tonight’s version is presented with today’s technology; tomorrow’s versions will embrace developments in electronic instrument-making so that the imagination may pursue its path toward the impression of reality. For Debussy, a prelude was ‘the everlasting preface to a remark that would never be made.’ In this work, I have attempted to connect a succession of ‘prefaces’ using various musical means for which the following text—which describes the twelve subtitles of the preludes—might be a metaphor:

Depuis la rive du temps,	Since the edge of time,
au loin face au silence,	afar in front of silence,
non visibles encore,	still invisible,
en devenir à présent,	becoming real now,
sur l’ombre du peut-être,	on the shadow of the possible,
depuis peu maintenant dévoilés;	just now unveiled;
par la ligne,	by the line,
par le point,	by the point,
par les reflets croisés:	through the crossed reflections:
l’image des phrases déployées,	the image of phrases unfurled,
le miroir des signes détournés,	the mirror of circuitous signs,
l’esquisse des jours enlacés.	the sketch of interwoven days.

Dedicated to Fausto Romitelli, Paris’s *12 préludes* employ a changing constellation of four different tuning systems, only one of which matches the “equal temperament” system that gradually became standard keyboard practice after the eighteenth century. Moreover, there are always at least two (and usually three) of the available tuning systems “in play” for any given Prelude. The work thus offers a shifting landscape that plays not just with pitch, but also with time (as the poetry suggests) and even with space (as it proves impossible to trace particular sounds back to their proper electronic keyboards).

PASCAL DUSAPIN (B. 1955)

“For years I have been accused of being too accessible,” reported Pascal Dusapin in a New York Times interview with Alan Riding: “In the evangelical world of contemporary music, you can’t talk of love, emotion, expression. It’s badly viewed.” So speaks a composer who has distanced himself from avant-garde ideology without abandoning avant-garde music. Dusapin has kept his distance from musical institutions in general and (apart from a brief foray in 1976) from IRCAM in particular. Although he has been composer-in-residence for a variety of groups, he makes his living primarily as a free-lance composer. He has used electronics only rarely in his works to date and, just in case anyone might miss the point of his independence, he has stated outright: “I think I am proof that you can live without Boulez.”

Dusapin’s early inclinations set him apart from many of his compatriots. He was trained as an organist and studied art history at the Sorbonne from 1974–78, while composing largely on his own. Encouraged by the French composer Andre Boucourechliev to seek more systematic instruction in composition, he attended classes with Messiaen at the Conservatoire only briefly before settling into a longer apprenticeship with Iannis Xenakis, punctuated by occasional contact with Franco Donatoni. As Yves Lecoq of Radio-France has observed, these last two figures exerted an audible influence on Dusapin’s early works including *Souvenir de Silence* (1976, inspired by Donatoni) and *Timee* (1978, dedicated to Xenakis).

From these men, and no doubt from his experiences at the organ, Dusapin developed his interest in instrumental timbres and textures. Although he has for the most part eschewed electronics, it is not hard to hear ideas made available by electronic media resounding in his acoustic works. For example, in his cello octet *Loop* (1995–96), Dusapin treats groups of four cellists “somewhat like two 16-stringed cellos” that move in and out of sync with one another, waxing and waning their way through shifting rhythmic patterns. Similar textures motivate two of his earlier string works as well, the *Musique fugitive* for

string trio (1980) and the String Quartet of 1983. In each case, the ensemble functions more often than not like a single instrument, erasing what little timbral distinction exists between the members of the string family in favor of a tremendous welter of performance techniques: fluttering trills, glissandi (slides), tiny moments of polyphony, and even pitch-bending that seems to approximate spoken language. Such diversity in nuance and articulation also enlivens Dusapin's extensive series of solo works which—as a testament to the composer's whimsical sense of humor—all bear titles beginning with the letter “I”. (This limitation is less stringent than it might seem, given that Dusapin has helped himself to at least five languages in the process: *Inside, Incisa, Item, Itou, Ici, Iti, In & Out, I pesci, Invece, Ipso*, and *Immer!*) His trombone solo *Indeed* was written in 1987 for Benny Sluchin, the same performer who had premiered Xenakis's *Keren* the previous year before; it supplements the sliding techniques expected of any modern trombone work with extremely muted notes, flutter-tongue effects, and quasi-theatrical movements of the instrument through space.

It is no accident that Dusapin's instrumental works should breathe the air of the theater, for opera and oratorio have always held pride of place among the composer's efforts. “I go to the opera all the time nowadays,” he says: “When I was in my 20s, I liked opera music but would attend operas with my eyes closed. Now the theatrical side fascinates me. I have probably seen ten different productions of *Wozzeck*. And what I notice is a broad public for opera, which represents all forms of [the] human psyche. The more I see television being dumbed down, the more I am relieved that opera, theater and the performing arts are still alive.” Dusapin began his stage career with the opera *Roméo et Juliette* (1985-88, on a text by Olivier Cadot), which draws together singing and speaking, a central tableau for orchestra, a quartet based on Native American song, and a solo clarinet part that, according to musicologist Paul Griffiths “unfolds in expanses of sustained expressive color,” within a narrative that is at times “close” and “intense” and at other times “distant” and “memorialized.” In addition to two oratorios, Dusapin has also composed a chamber opera on texts by Gertrude Stein, *To Be Sung* (1992-93), fracturing her already abstract prose by dividing it up between voices.

Dusapin is an extraordinarily prolific composer. During the 1990s, he

produced two operas, an oratorio, ten orchestral scores, and a host of chamber works, including commissions from the Arditti String Quartet and the ensemble Accroche-Note. He has won prizes from SACEM, the Académie des Beaux-Arts, Critics' Association, the French Ministry of Culture. In addition to receiving fellowships to work at the Villa Medici (1981-83) and in the United States in 1988, he has been composer-in-residence with the Orchestre National de Lyon and has worked with such choreographers as Regine Chopinot and François Raffinot. In 2003, *To Be Sung* was featured at the Sounds French festival and his new opera *Perelà, uomo di fumo* (*Perelà, Man of Smoke*) (1998-2001), received a prestigious premiere at the Opéra National de Paris/Bastille under the baton of James Conlon. He is currently working on an opera based on Christopher Marlowe's *Faustus*.

***Cascando* (*Cascading*) (1997)**

for flute/piccolo, oboe/English horn, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet/piccolo trumpet, trombone, and double bass

Dusapin has long counted hearing a performance of Edgard Varèse's large orchestral score *Arcana* as one of his formative musical experiences. In his octet *Cascando*, he has chosen to replicate the more limited instrumentation of Varèse's *Octandre*, for woodwinds, brass, and double bass—the same instrumentarium that accompanies Dusapin's choral *Dona Eis*, completed the same year.

Like the composer's chamber music for strings, *Cascando* suggests an ensemble breathing and speaking as one meta-instrument. Here, too, the resulting texture ripples with rhythmic activity not unlike the emergent patterns of minimalist music, but far less regular. Pitch material is limited—especially at the beginning and end of the piece—to focus attention on collective motion that is now propulsive, now lingering, sometimes static, but never leisurely, as Dusapin's potential energy is never far from the musical surface. Although individual instruments tend to melt into the ensemble's overall sound, there are some notable exceptions: occasional horn calls in the distance, the uppermost registers of the bird-like piccolo, and especially the chant-like sliding of the trombone, which seems to offer a benediction before the congregation of players disperses. Unifying the whole is a

gentle emphasis on downward motion that may have given *Cascando* its title. Unison statements tend to descend, climactic moments are marked by falling figures, and the repeated Ds that open the piece yield to C#s at the end, giving the entire piece the character of a miniature drama, wrapped up in an extended sigh.

Cascando was commissioned by the Essl Collection (founded by Karlheinz Essl) for performance in the Schömer-Haus auditorium, and it received its premiere during the 1997 Wien Modern Festival. The work is dedicated to Ivan Fedele, whose *Maja* was performed by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players last November.

PHILIPPE HUREL (B. 1955)

Keenly aware of his place in the history of French music, Hurel is an articulate spokesperson for the diverse generation of composers following Murail and Grisey. In the wake of his participation in the 2003 Sounds French festival, sponsored by the French Association for Artistic Action, he was asked to explain the event's unifying themes. In conversation with Matthias Kriesberg of The New York Times, he replied: "From Debussy through to spectral composers, [French] music has been organized around harmony." Hurel neatly encapsulates the historical importance of both the French impressionists' colorful chords and the spectralists' attention to the resonant harmonics inherent in the overtone series above any fundamental pitch. Yet if this formulation is also meant to reveal something about Hurel's own music, then we must consider "harmony" in the very broadest sense of the term—as did the founding figures of spectralism—for Hurel has always coupled his attention to pitch with a tendency toward counterpoint and, in more recent years, with a desire to enliven his music with a wide range of rhythmic characters, including passages reminiscent of jazz.

Like Leroux and Paris, Hurel worked with Jolas and Malec during his years at the Paris Conservatoire. He also studied computer music privately with Tristan Murail in 1983-84. Not surprisingly, his first compositions paid special attention to the relationships between harmony

and timbre (tone color) and to the gradual metamorphosis of musical materials. In works like his tenor saxophone solo *Opçit* (1983-84; revised for clarinet in 1993), Hurel exploited the instrument's entire range of timbres, from the guttural to the ethereal. Among his larger scores, *Fragment de lune (Moon Fragment)* (1986-87) added electronic components to blur the boundaries between acoustic and synthetic sound. During the late 1980s, Hurel became increasingly preoccupied with the internal counterpoint of his music. He observes that *Pour l'Image* (1986-87) initiated a series of works using ever denser notation and ever more "saturated," rigorous polyphony, reaching a culmination point in 1994 with *Pour Luigi*.

Beginning in the 1990s, a more radical transformation took place as the composer came to grips with rhythms drawn not just from the classical tradition, but from jazz and popular musics as well. Between his *Six miniatures en trompe-l'oeil*, written in 1991, and the *Quatre Variations* of 1999-2000, Hurel recalls that he was "trying to consolidate two worlds whose coexistence sometimes seems impossible: rhythms derived from jazz and funk, together with the harmonic and formal work achieved through spectral techniques." For whatever reason, the vibraphone seems to have had a special role in broadening Hurel's rhythmic frame of reference. In addition to being a dominant player in his sextet. . . *B mesure* (1996) and half of the featured duo in his homage to Grisey, the vibraphone is the central character in *Quatre variations*, which pits the percussion soloist against a sixteen-piece orchestra, and the solo voice in *Loops II* (2000-02), which involves a "process of cell transformation [that] always brings you back to the motif announced at the outset." Since 2000, Hurel's works have been inspired less by jazz and more by an attempt to synthesize the compositional facets of his earlier scores. He deepened his interest in counterpoint with the octet *Figures libres* (2001), *Aura* (2002) for piano and orchestra, and *Trois études mécaniques* (2004), in which rhythmic canons (generated in part by computer software) coalesce at times into material that the composer has called his "imaginary folklore" because of its resemblance to various "world musics." Also in 2004, Hurel paid homage to Luciano Berio in his *Ritornello* (2004; for flute and piano) and to Debussy in *Phonus* (2004; for flute and orchestra)—two works in which the rhythmic patterns of his "loop" pieces mingle with contrapuntal and variation techniques as

well as harmonies reminiscent of “spectralism.”

The kinetic energy and harmonic ingenuity of Hurel’s scores has captured the attention of many performing artists, including the choreographer François Raffinot, who took the *Six miniatures en trompe-l’oeil* as the basis for his 1997 ballet *Rift*. In describing the immediacy of Hurel’s music, he offers what might be considered a “concert-goers’ guide” to the works of this innovative French composer: “Listen to these evolving textures, the constant renewal,” Raffinot writes. “And then listen for the brusque sonorous signals that return from earlier passages. The incandescent wash of sound suddenly crystallizes in place, stopped short in the midst of its progression. A musical moment suspended, as a melting lava flow plunges into the sea and freezes, for the space of a second or less, passing suddenly through a musical inferno of cadmium red, luminous and inexorable to this language of sounds, black, sooty, corrugated, shadowy, subdued and aged, before bursting anew under the pressure of new acoustic waves. . . .How can you understand these new alloys?”

In addition to being a fellow at the Villa Medici from 1986-88, Hurel has won the Förderpreis from the Siemens-Stiftung in Munich as well as two prizes from SACEM. He has earned commissions from Ensemble Intercontemporain, IRCAM, the New York New Music Ensemble, the Orchestre de Paris, Radio-France, Les Percussions de Strasbourg, Interface, Ensemble Recherche, Itinéraire, Bit20, Cité de la Musique, the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo’s Shizuoka Hall, and the French Ministry of Culture, among others. In addition to teaching at IRCAM from 1997-2001, he has served as composer-in-residence at the Arsenal de Metz and the Philharmonie de Lorraine. In 1990, Hurel founded Ensemble Court-circuit and became its artistic director. In 2004, he joined the faculty of McGill University, which featured several of his pieces at their Festival MusiMars, including the *Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey*. He has recently finished a work for voice and six instruments, *CANTUS*, which was commissioned by the French government for Françoise Kubler and Accroche-Note, and he is currently working on a piece for percussion and electronics commissioned by IRCAM for premiere at the Agora Festival in 2006.

Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey (1999)

for piano and percussion

When recounting the origins of his piano-percussion duo *Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey*, Hurel describes two moments of great intensity: hearing the long solo piano section of Grisey’s *Vortex temporum* (performed by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 2003); and the emotional aftermath following Grisey’s untimely death: “The rapid juxtaposition of widely differentiated elements, as well as the constraints imposed by the tuning of the piano (four of its notes are deliberately put out of tune), lead to an impressive display of compositional and performing skills. Never had Gérard’s music sounded so violent to my ears. Despite. . .the apparently untamed sound of the solo, it was the deliberate gestures that engaged my attention, for they gave rise to dramatic tension at every instant.”

“When Gérard died, I was working on a piece for piano and vibraphone of a playful nature. The immense grief that suddenly overwhelmed me led me to abandon the project, of which nothing but the instrument names remained. How better could I pay homage to Gérard, other than writing my very own music, with no reference to his, no signs of his influence? Nevertheless, it was the very violence of the *Vortex temporum* solo that started my piece off. It was imperative not to study the score, and yet to retain its force and use it as a metaphor. I had never had to confront this type of work before. The piece took on the appearance of a ritual, and the vibraphone player found himself with extra instruments such as cow bells, Thai gongs, crotales and woodblocks—all to ‘disturb’ the piano without actually putting it out of tune, as Grisey had done. For the first time ever, my music would not be objective. I had great difficulty in evaluating the material, and my momentary yielding to complete intuition might not have pleased the dedicatee. The piece is, however, imbued with Grisey’s spirit, and could not have seen the light of day without him.”

PHILIPPE LEROUX (B. 1959)

For the last twenty years, Philippe Leroux has opened ears worldwide with music that radiates energy, revealing the inner life of individual sonorities against a musical fabric that is always buoyant and in motion. Already central to France's contemporary music scene, Leroux writes spontaneously playful, yet carefully constructed scores that are winning him ever greater recognition from ensembles in the United States, including the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, which follows its 2003 U.S. premiere of *M* with tonight's U.S. premiere of *VOI(REX)*.

Born in Boulogne, Leroux took up the piano and the guitar before entering the Paris Conservatoire to study composition with Ivo Malec and electro-acoustic music with Guy Reibel and Pierre Schaeffer; his other teachers have included Olivier Messiaen, Franco Donatoni, Betsy Jolas, and Iannis Xenakis. Leroux's thoughts on harmony and tone color have been linked to the experiments in "spectral music" carried out by Murail and Grisey, who sought to derive musical material from the internal structure of sounds. His music also distinguishes itself through its attention to pulse, rhythm, and momentum. According to Dominique Druhen, an expert on Leroux's work, the composer is preoccupied with "movement—its birth, its death, and the conservation of that energy which enables its continuation."

Pondering such abstract concerns suggests a certain philosophical—almost mystical—depth below the sparkling surfaces of his scores. Indeed, the composer's commentary on the creative process often resembles poetry as much as musical analysis: "Sound actions (élans, races, downfalls, surges, pulsations...) ...are then set in motion by processes of transformation which are more or less continuous (compression/dilation, acceleration/deceleration, shifting of a pitch or timbre, dephrasing/rephrasing, accumulation/filtering, substitution, emerging/submerging, mimicry. . .) and whose limits (beginnings and ends of the processes, cadences, stages, changes of harmonic mode, mirror axes, diverse articulations. . .) define the different surroundings of the journey (from where one is leaving / to where one is going)."

Even without delving into the technical components of Leroux's style, one can appreciate the emphasis on motion in the titles of some of his best known works: the chamber piece *Fleuve (River)*, (1988), the quintet *Continuo(ns)* (1994), and the Violin Concerto *(d')ALLER* (1995). Underlying these evocative titles, are myriad ways of creating and dispelling momentum. In *(d')ALLER*, for example, rapid scales and arpeggios seem to shrink and expand as notes are added or removed, forming a shimmering backdrop for the contest between soloist and ensemble. This concerto is the central panel in Leroux's triptych *Continuo(ns)-(d')ALLER-Plus Loin* (1999-2000), whose titles collectively spell out what might be considered an artistic credo: "Let us go farther."

Much of Leroux's recent music involves the gradual transformation of sound sources. Sometimes these transformations are concrete, as in his chamber work *AAA* (1996), which takes a quotation from baroque composer Jean-Philippe Rameau's *La Poule (The Hen)* as the springboard for a voluble chatter of variations. Typically, however, Leroux's sound modulations are more abstract; for example, the 1998 trio *De l'épaisseur (On Density)* explores the title concept by creating a "tangle of lines" which change over time, presenting different intensities of tone color, register, texture, and dynamics. Even more strikingly, in *M* (1997; for two pianos, percussion, and electronics), the composer analyzed the attack and decay of selected piano sonorities to generate electronic sounds intimately related to their acoustic roots, creating a remarkable fluidity between electronic and non-electronic timbres.

Leroux's works have been commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, IRCAM, l'Ensemble Intercontemporain, Festival Musica, Les Percussions de Strasbourg, Norway's BIT 20, and the Belgian group Ictus. His music has been heard around the world at the Tempo, Music Today, Agora, Roma-Europa, Nuove Synchronie, Bath and numerous other Festivals as well as in performance by New York's New Music Ensemble and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. In 1994, he received SACEM's Hervé Dugardin prize, and two years later, he won their second prize for his Violin Concerto *(d')ALLER*. From 1993-95, he was Resident at the Académie de France in Rome, and he currently teaches at IRCAM. The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players

has recently commissioned a new work from Leroux with the support of the Koussevitzky Music Foundation; it will be performed in the 2007-2008 season.

VOI(REX) (2002)

for voice, flute/piccolo, clarinet/bass clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, piano, and electronics

voir: v. tr. to see, to consider, to understand

voie: n. line, way, means

voix: n. voice

As its title suggests, *VOI(REX)* inhabits a world in which meaning hangs on the balance of a single letter. Built on words by Lin Delpierre, its five movements (played without pause) offer a thorough-going sonic exploration of the act of writing and the written forms of letters. Leroux explains: “The idea for this came to me when I was getting interested in the form of [sound] waves (sinusoidal, triangular, square. . .). Waves are, in a way, melodic archetypes. . .Owing to the use of a poetic text in *VOI(REX)*, I thought at great length about the question of writing, in particular learning how to write and the numerous hours that everyone spends learning how to form the letters. These are ‘inscribed’ in us, like elementary gestures. It was thus that I went naturally from the sound translation of wave forms to that of calligraphy.” Leroux’s intertwining of sound shapes and sight lines is both physical and literal. For example, he notes that “the text of the second movement of *VOI(REX)* begins with an ‘A’. The instruments take care of the oblique, rising and falling bars of the letter, and the voice translates the horizontal bar. I believe one hears the melodic profile quite clearly when one knows the letter it represents.”

The electronic components of *VOI(REX)* are drawn largely from vocal sounds, including Leroux’s own voice. The vocalist actually deploys the electronics in live performance, following along in the score and triggering each sequence of sounds by means of a ring-shaped switch on her finger. Even in this potentially rarified realm of computer-generated sound, the traces of writing are apparent, for Leroux (assisted at IRCAM by Frédéric Voisin) crafted a program that shaped musical elements according to the speed and pressure of pencil on paper (or mouse on mousepad) exerted as Leroux

wrote out Delpierre’s poetry. The vocal part, too, is text-driven. In addition to executing a staggering range of vocal “characters”—running the gamut from speech to song, high to low, sense to nonsense—she must mime letters, words, and occasionally punctuation marks! As a result, listeners can catch aural glimpses of words in motion even without knowing all the means by which *VOI(REX)* casts its spell.

—Beth E. Levy

I	- après éblouissement - En part
Un peu de voix S'achoppant À soi même	Apurant le néant
L'invisible debout Devant l'oiseau	IV Avec L'inachevé A son faite
La gorge noire De lumière —————	De désir, tenu, tendu Non tenu de mort
La bouche désaffectée Offusquée de cailloux et de fables	Qu'il se jette Enroulé dans sa chute
Ses empreintes De plus en plus profondes Dans le resserrement du jour	Plumage moite enflammé
Brident l'expansion dans la clarté	Fasciné De failles Du bleu passe vers le monde.
II	—————
Aiguë, l'herbe passe dans le soleil, bleue Becs lucides brasillent feuillages De granit nuques bourdonnent Aux jarrets des jonquilles jusque L'ombre tombe des prairies mariales La mésange saigne sur l'ouïe Muette ou quelque combe Vers la lumière infranchissable	Devant tout autour En hauteur À tourner dans nous Une muraille Que la nuit étaye —————
III	Élévation étouffement
Part intouchable par La bouche	Ta rare respiration
De part	Soleil, Rat dans la ramure de l'aigle. —————

En justice de foudre Les mains coupées Renaissent Présage de langueur	Dépouillé dans la ténèbre qui procède du soleil.
_____	_____
Dégagée du grain Guêpe	Criant vers. Une lumière brûle les bords de ta voix
Des figuiers Neige de l'ange	Poussière sur les sandales
Du - abruptement-respirer-que -	Invisiblement dans l'éphémère Les cerisiers fleurissent, - Déracinant l'inséparable d'ici
Dans Aibre Débute	_____
Insigne printemps	Ta chevelure dans l'obscurité de la fenêtre Plus cachée que le soleil descend jusqu'à tes pieds Qui font bifurquer le chemin
Sa compacité turbulente	Lumière sans arbre sans La ténèbre qu'apporte un corps Chaos s'il est beau lumière
_____	De cette célérité blanche D'une lettre
Arbre élucidé de la foudre	_____
Accueille en avant des fleurs	Au bord du cri de la durée de l'air A droite et dans la chute Un aigle inaugure la montagne
Ce corps de cueillir	
V	Toucherais-je en ta bouche L'été muet
La faille, en bas	Ultime resserrement du jour
Haut(e), l'inachevé à son faite	_____
Avouant langueur à l'ange	de page en murmure
Dans la cécité blanche du corps	le dispute à
_____	l'ange là-bas
Je suis le voleur aux mains coupées Pour la thrène de tes lombes adoubcées de l'abeille et ta nuque nubile	s'arrête le jour tout à coup l'obscurité
Parmi le froid Parmi les arbres je me tiens dans la mort Le visage pantelant de temps	confond introublée le corps bouleversé

Featured Performers

Donatienne Michel-Dansac makes her United States debut with tonight's concert. She is widely acknowledged as the leading French soprano of her generation for the performance of contemporary music, and a number of France's leading composers have chosen to compose works for her, including Georges Aperghis (1998 winner of France's Grand Prix National in music), Philippe Manoury (1998 winner of the Grand Prix in composition for the City of Paris), Gérard Pesson, and Philippe Leroux. In 1988, she interpreted Luciano Berio's *Labyrinth II* with the Ensemble Intercontemporain, under the direction of Pierre Boulez. She has also been a featured soloist with such groups as l'Itinéraire, l'Ensemble Fa, IRCAM, the London Sinfonetta, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio-France, and has appeared at such festivals as Musica de Strasbourg, Milano Musicale, Ultima d'Oslo, Archipel de Genève, and many others.

Michel-Dansac began her musical career at age seven, studying piano and violin. After eight seasons at the Maîtrise de l'Opéra in Nantes, she received a Prix de Chant at the Paris Conservatoire in 1990. In addition to contemporary music, she performs and has recorded Baroque music (Handel, Rameau, Rossi with les Arts Florissants), Romantic music (Debussy, Schubert, Schumann), notably in recital with pianist Vincent Leterme (Radio-France, Opéra-Bastille), and Classical repertoire (Haydn, Mozart) with the National Orchestra of France, among others. She has collaborated with many leading opera companies, performing at Nantes, Lille, Tours, Montpellier, le Châtelet, la Comédie Française, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Vienna Musikverein, and London's Alice Tully Hall. She has made three Baroque music recordings for Harmonia Mundi, and has recorded contemporary works for a variety of labels including Nocturne.

Pianist **Julie Steinberg** performs regularly as a soloist and chamber musician. Since 1980, she has appeared many times with the San Francisco Symphony in such world premiere performances as John Adams's *Grand Pianola Music*, as a soloist in Arvo Pärt's *Tabula*

Rasa, and in Michael Tilson Thomas's Mavericks concerts. Steinberg has appeared at New Music America, the Ravinia Festival, Japan Interlink, and Lincoln Center Outdoors. Other performances include *Le Sacre du printemps* with the Paul Taylor Dance Company in San Francisco, Seattle, and Paris. As an assisting artist, she has performed in master classes with Jean-Pierre Rampal and Mstislav Rostropovich. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts from Stanford University and has been a member of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players since 1989.

William Winant, percussionist, has collaborated with some of the most innovative musicians of our time, including John Cage, Iannis Xenakis, Keith Jarrett, Anthony Braxton, James Tenney, Steve Reich, the Kronos String Quartet, and the John Zorn Chamber Ensemble. In 1984, along with violinist David Abel and pianist Julie Steinberg, he founded the Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio. Specializing in the music of the Pacific Rim, they were artists-in-residence at Mills College for eight years and have commissioned over twenty-five new works for violin, piano, and percussion. Since 1995, Winant has toured the world with the avant-rock band Mr. Bungle, and in 1999 he worked with the influential rock band Sonic Youth to produce *Goodbye 20th Century*, a recording of avant-garde composers that won acclaim from The Los Angeles Times and New York's Village Voice. In 1997, he participated in the world premiere of Lou Harrison's *Rhymes with Silver* with cellist Yo-Yo Ma and the Mark Morris Dance Group and since 2003 he has been percussionist for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Winant has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, and the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, as well as at festivals and recitals worldwide. He teaches at U.C. Berkeley and U. C. Santa Cruz, and he has been a member of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players since 1988.

David Milnes is a conductor of extraordinary breadth and long-standing commitment to contemporary music. In his early years, he studied not only piano and organ, but also clarinet, cello, and voice. Milnes received his undergraduate education in music at SUNY Stony Brook. In 1984, at age 27, he won the prestigious Exxon Conductor position with the San Francisco Symphony. He remained as the Symphony's Assistant Conductor and Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra until 1986, working closely with Edo de Waart and Herbert Blomstedt. Following study and collaboration with such renowned conductors as Leonard Bernstein, Erich Leinsdorf, Otto-Werner Müller, and Michael Tilson Thomas, he earned his doctorate in conducting from Yale University in 1989.

From 1994-2002, Milnes was Principal Guest Conductor of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra and also guest conducted numerous orchestras across the United States. He has conducted at the Tanglewood, Aspen, and Monadnock Music Festivals, and has led operatic repertoire ranging from Mozart to Weill. He maintains a keen interest in jazz, which has led to appearances on jazz saxophone with Gene Krupa, Chuck Mangione, John Pizzarelli, and Billy Taylor.

In 1996, Milnes joined the music faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, where he directs its symphony orchestra and the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players. He first conducted the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1997, and joined the ensemble as Music Director in June 2002.

The **San Francisco Contemporary Music Players** (SFCMP), now in its 35th year, is a leader among America's most distinguished and successful chamber music organizations, performing, commissioning, and recording the music of today's composers. The group presents works written for both large and small chamber ensembles. SFCMP is a nine-time winner of the prestigious national ASCAP/Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music, having commissioned 66 pieces and performed over 1,000 new works, including 52 U.S. and 126 world premieres.

Each season the ensemble performs a subscription series in the Bay Area. It 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 eight albums of its own and contributed to eight others. Its musical outreach programs have involved masterclasses, performance demonstrations, and an evening course for adults.

Executive Director **Adam Frey** obtained his B.A. in Music from Harvard University, and his M.B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, with emphasis on marketing and planning. He joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1991 after six years with Sherman, Clay Co., then the nation's largest keyboard instrument retailer, where he was Vice President in charge of Merchandising. He serves on the Board of Governors of the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco. Mr. Frey is also a writer; his work has been published in *The Mississippi Review*.

Director of Operations and Marketing, **Matthew Schumaker** studied music and philosophy as an undergraduate at Dartmouth and continued as a graduate student at Princeton, where he received an MA in music composition. While at Princeton, he took part in coordinating concert production for the university's new music ensemble. He subsequently studied composition in Holland with Louis Andriessen. He joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players staff in September, 2004.

Jessica Pascucci, Assistant Director for Development and Communications, graduated from Smith College with a B.A. in Music and Italian Studies. She studied at the Fiesole Music School and researched the conservatory and its connection with contemporary music as a Blumberg Fellow in Florence, Italy. A flutist of seventeen years, she has performed in music ensembles at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and Carnegie Hall. She joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players staff in September, 2005.

Gregory T. Kuhn, Sound Engineer, is a multi-disciplinary and multi-media artist freelancing in the performing and fine arts as sound engineer, designer, composer, installation designer, collaborator, and fine arts photographer. His works are experienced by audiences around the world often in the contexts of contemporary music and multi-media performances, and in new and experimental media exhibitions in galleries and museums. Upcoming projects in the performing arts include new works by Rinde Eckert, Paul Drescher, Joan Jeanrenaud, and Margaret Jenkins, and concerts by the California EAR Unit and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. His 1999 collaborative installation, “Mori: an Internet based Earthwork” will next be on exhibit at the Arlington (VA) Arts Center Nov. ‘05 - Jan. ‘06.

Robert Shumaker, Recording Engineer, has been recording the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players’ concerts and CD releases for over twenty years. Most recently, he recorded the ensemble’s album of compositions by Andrew Imbrie, and the ensemble’s James Newton album, *As the Sound of Many Waters*. Starting out as an engineer for rock concerts and recordings in San Francisco in the late 1960s, Shumaker went on to tour the Soviet Union twice with the Rova Saxophone Quartet, as well as making a tour of nine countries with the David Grisman Quartet. He has engineered over five hundred commercial recordings of artists ranging from Judy Collins to Diamanda Galas and from Van Morrison to Henry Brant. During the 1970s and ‘80s, he recorded the complete works of Conlon Nancarrow for 1750 Arch Records and Wergo. His work has been twice nominated for a Grammy Award.

Michael Ferriell Zbyszynski, Technical Consultant, is a composer, sound artist, performer, and teacher in the field of contemporary electroacoustic music. He holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. in composition from the University of California, Berkeley and studied at the Academy of Music in Cracow, Poland, on a Fulbright Grant. Playing flute, saxophones, clarinet, Yamaha WX-7, live electronics, or things made from coffee cans and PVC, he has appeared with Roscoe Mitchell, Myra Melford, David Wessel, the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, at the Oregon Bach Festival, the Montréal Jazz Festival, and as a soloist at venues from San Diego to Vancouver. He can be heard on the ARTSHIP recording label. Currently, he is a researcher at UC Berkeley’s Center for New Music and Audio Technologies.

Additional Listening and Reading

More information about an award-winning CD of works by **François Paris** (featuring soprano Donatienne Michel-Dansac and including *Sur la nuque de la mer étoilée* and *Roque*, among others) can be found at www.musiquefrancaise.net (MFA).

The discography of **Pascal Dusapin** is extensive, including recordings of *Romée et Juliette* (Accord), *To Be Sung* (Radio France), and *Perelà* (Naïve), as well as a spectacular rendering of his choral works *Granum sinapis*, *Umbrae mortis*, and *Dona Eis* by the chamber choir *Accentus* (Montaigne Auvidis). His 7 *Études* have been recorded by Ian Pace on a CD that also contains the Orchestre de Paris’s performance of his recent score *A quia* under *Christopher Eschenbach* (Naïve). Available chamber works include Arditti String Quartet’s performance of his Second String Quartet (“Time Zones”) (Montaigne Auvidis), two Accroche-Note discs (Accord, Harmonic), Barry Sluchin playing *Indeed* (Adda) and the cello octet *Loop* (Tranes européennes).

Philippe Hurel’s *Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey* has been recorded on a CD that also includes performances by the Orchestre de Paris and Ensemble Court Circuit of . . . *à mesure*, *Pour Luigi*, and *Flash-Back* (aeon). The Ensemble Intercontemporain has recorded *Six miniatures en trompe-l’oeil*, *Opcit*, and *Pour l’image*, and *Leçon de choses* on the Accord label, which has also released *Fragment de lune* as rendered by Musique Oblique. Forthcoming is a CD titled *Loops* and *Tributes* that will include *Ritornello*, *Loops I, II, and III*, as well as a new recording of *Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey*.

Several of **Philippe Leroux**’s works have been recorded on European labels available on amazon.com.fr. *VOI(REX)* has been recorded by Ensemble l’Itinéraire. Listeners may find *Continuo(ns)*, *Fleuve*, and other selections on a Harmonia Mundi CD; *Souffles* and *(d’)ALLER* have been issued by Concord. Additional excerpts, including portions of *M*, may be heard on the IRCAM website: <http://mac-texier.ircam.fr/textes/c00001323/>

—Beth E. Levy

SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS

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 Susan Freier (1993), violin II
 Stephen Harrison (1982), cello
 Tod Brody (2001), flute
 William Wohlmacher (1995), clarinet
 Carey Bell (2004), clarinet
 Rufus Olivier (1991), bassoon
 Lawrence Ragent (1981), French horn

Charles Metzger (1976), trumpet
 Hall Goff (1979), trombone
 Peter Wahrhaftig (1989), tuba
 Karen Gottlieb (1990), harp
 Paul Binkley (1981), guitar
 Julie Steinberg (1989), piano
 William Winant (1988), percussion
 Daniel Kennedy (1993), percussion
 Christopher Froh (2003), percussion

**Dates indicate year of joining*

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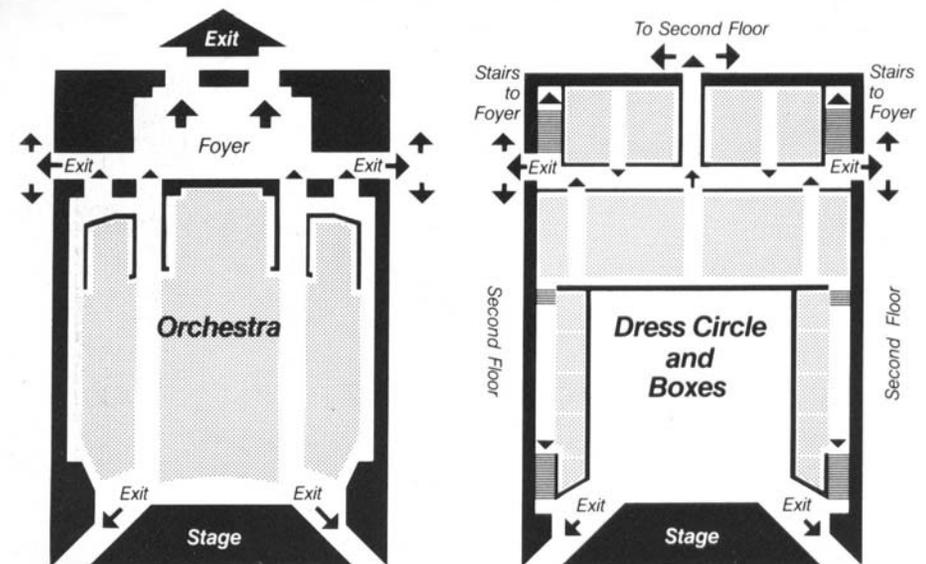
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