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Performers

Tod Brody, flute
William Wohlmacher, clarinet (Logan, Ueno)
Carey Bell, clarinet (Eckardt, Dennehy)
Samuel Williams, electric guitar
Roy Malan, violin (Logan, Dennehy)
Graeme Jennings, violin (Eckardt)
Robin Hong, viola
Stephen Harrison, cello
Thalia Moore, cello
Richard Worn, contrabass (Ueno)
Michel Taddei, contrabass (Dennehy)
Julie Steinberg, piano (Logan, Eckardt)
Teresa McCollough, piano (Ueno)
Christopher Froh, percussion (Dennehy)
Daniel Kennedy, percussion (Ueno)
William Winant, percussion (Logan)

SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS

David Milnes, Music Director

Monday, 24 April 2006 8 pm
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts - Forum

BLOOD AND GLAMOUR: NEW MUSIC FROM THE CITY

DONNACHA DENNEHY

Glamour Sleeper (2002-03)

United States Premiere

WENDELL LOGAN

Transition (2005)

World Premiere, Commission

KEN UENO

... blood blossoms ... (2002)

~ INTERMISSION ~

Roberto Morales-Manzanares

Cenzontle (Mockingbird) (2004)

Introduction

Wall

Flower

Spot

Roberto Morales-Manzanares, flute, electronics, and video

Jason Eckardt

After Serra (2000)

We thank the Fromm Music Foundation for its assistance in commissioning Wendell Logan's Transition and for helping to underwrite tonight's premiere performance.

This concert presentation of works by Jason Eckardt, Wendell Logan and Ken Ueno is made possible in part by the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, and the Alice M. Ditson Fund.



Thanks to Michael Zbyszynski, John MacCallum and Aaron Einbond, for technical supervision and other contributions.

HK Gruber's cabaret *Frankenstein!!***Wednesday, May 10 8pm****Thursday, May 11 8pm (Flint Center, Cupertino)****Friday, May 12 6:30pm******Saturday, May 13 8pm****Edwin Outwater**, conductor**HK Gruber**, vocalist**Douglas Rioth**, harp**Debussy** *Danses sacrée et profane***Thomas Adès** *Living Toys***Bizet** *Jeux d'enfants***HK Gruber** *Frankenstein!!*

In *Frankenstein!!*, the traditional orchestra doubles on a battery of toy instruments, ranging from the deceptively tuneful to the mildly berserk, like a Looney Tune score imagined by Mozart. This is not a retelling of the Frankenstein story - the lyrics are “children’s rhymes” that paint disturbingly comic scenarios of Dracula, James Bond, Superman, John Wayne, Batman, and other characters. Gruber is the speaker-singer-actor who guides us through this fantastic musical comic book for adults.

May 10 concert sponsored by City National Bank

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DONNACHA DENNEHY (B. 1970)

In a recent interview with Jonathan Grimes of Ireland’s Contemporary Music Centre, Donnacha Dennehy explains his fascination with all things urban. “From being a kid and growing up in Dublin I’ve always had—and still do—a childish delight in cities. I just love cities. I enjoy the countryside too but as a kind of a relaxation. I enjoy the bustle and all the things that people complain about in cities. It’s all the weirdness of humankind concentrated in cities, and yet it’s also ordinary. That kind of energy has always been strong for me in my music.” Unfailingly noisy and amiably communal, Dennehy’s music captures the excitement of city life with personality and flair. “There is a whiff of high-class vandalism about my recent work,” he writes: “Processes which undermine the integrity of my material provide the thrill factor in composing. My preoccupation with ideas of ‘urban’ music remains.”

In true European fashion, Dennehy took up the recorder in elementary school, eventually studying both recorder and flute at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. An intrepid music instructor taught the ten-year-old Dennehy harmony and counterpoint and, what’s more, introduced the youngster to the music of Stockhausen. “I was more interested in Stockhausen than I have been at any other point in my life,” he recalled in a 2003 interview with Michael Dungan: “I did find it fascinating, but I found it much more difficult than Stravinsky. I preferred Varèse. I got into Varèse and I liked minimalism. [Philip] Glass and people like that.” After complementing this early exposure to modern music with a thorough grounding in composition at Trinity College, he came to the United States on a Fulbright Fellowship to work on his doctoral degree at the University of Illinois, where his primary teacher was Salvatore Martirano. Further studies at the Royal Conservatory of the Hague and at IRCAM [Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique] have since rounded out his education with a variety of European perspectives.

Based on his experience at Illinois (which he describes as “a real eye-

opener” and “an extremely concentrated environment for new music”), Dennehy co-founded the Crash Ensemble almost immediately upon his return to Ireland in 1997 in order to foster “music for mixed media, stuff that was quite rhythmic, and with a little bit of an urban edge to it.” He recalls: “We weren’t afraid to acknowledge the influence of rock because it’s a very important part of our growing up now, anyone from my generation.” Since the late 1990s, Dennehy has produced a steady stream of impressive works, fulfilling commissions from the RTE (Irish Public Television) and the BBC, winning performances from the London Sinfonietta and the Percussion Group of the Hague, and collaborating with choreographers Shobana Jeyasingh and Yoshiko Chuma.

Dennehy’s early love of minimalism is easily audible in many of his present scores. Not unlike Bay Area composer John Adams, he fuses continuous textures and rhythmic repetitions with a strong dramatic impulse. For example, his sextet *Streetwalker*, premiered at the 2003 Bang on a Can Festival, features electric guitar (with a heavy dose of distortion), and piano (almost always treated percussively) in addition to strings, clarinet, and percussion, giving the entire ensemble a decided groove; Bernard Holland of the New York Times called it “shrill and tough, with constant shifts in rhythmic patterns.” *Elastic Harmonic* (2005)—which the composer emphatically calls “a piece for violin and orchestra” rather than a violin concerto—presents a similarly propulsive surface, denying any evocation of nineteenth-century lyricism. Further departures from romantic practice lie in his decision to use six “prepared” violins (instruments altered so that normal playing techniques produce unexpected results) within the orchestra ranks, and in the fact that the work was premiered on Irish State television rather than in a concert hall setting. Still more recently, he has completed a large scale work for chorus and “de-tuned” orchestra called *HIVE* in which, for example, adjacent wind players must tune a quarter-tone apart. “I consider it a really layered piece,” Dennehy states. “In a way, it’s very slow moving: there’s a lot of fast motion on the surface and it has a slow harmonic motion. I think of it as an immersive piece—you immerse yourself in this sound. There’s one section . . . [that] feels to me like all these ambulances passing by. It has this feeling that you’re immersed in a city: you’re here in this district, and you’re aware of another district over there.”

Dennehy has received commissions from the Percussion Group of the Hague, Ensemble Integrales, Prism, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, and the Aurelia Saxophone Quartet, among others, and his music has appeared at such festivals as ISCM World Music Days, EXPO 2000 in Germany, Amsterdam’s Gaudeamus Festival, and the Concerts M Montreal. In 2004, the Dutch group Electra performed his *The Weathering* (for electric violin, recorder and video) at Lincoln Center. Upcoming commissions include works for pianist Lisa Moore, the Fidelio Trio, and the Icebreaker ensemble of England. Dennehy is currently on the faculty at Trinity College, and in 2005, he was elected to Aosdána, Ireland’s state-sponsored academy for the creative arts.

Glamour Sleeper (2002-03)

for amplified clarinet, violin, double bass, percussion, and electronics

“The first section is **HARDCORE!** Attack violently but with panache.” This exhortation greets the performers of Dennehy’s *Glamour Sleeper*, commissioned for the Crash Ensemble’s own Up North Festival and premiered by the Danish group Contemporanea. In fact, this is just the first of many unusual performance instructions appearing in the score: for example, “relishing the plink plonk vibe.” At times the instruments are indistinguishable from the carefully distorted timbres of the electronic part; at other times, they seem almost human (or vaguely animalistic) as they respond to “expressive” markings ranging from “growling boisterous fluttertongue” and “as if panting,” to “fraught and exclamatory,” “intense (almost frightening),” “scratch sound,” “bridge squeak,” and “crunch the bow directly on body of instrument!”

The composer writes: “*Glamour Sleeper* is not a concept piece. It simply is itself, though the title hints at many possible meanings that are related to the material of the piece. Maybe Pierre Hantai’s superb recording of Scarlatti’s sonatas influenced the sharp corners. Maybe Dublin had an influence too—when working the piece out I called each section after a particular area in Dublin, so you had the Rialto Hocket, the Inchicore drag etc. One thing is for sure, this piece plays with what I call an elastic concept of rhythm, where if one element

shrinks the other expands etc, giving it an asymmetrical propulsive energy. Ultimately, however, the music and its corners play off each other, even to my surprise.”

WENDELL LOGAN (B. 1940)

In his 2003 contribution to William Banfield’s *Musical Landscapes in Color: Conversations with Black Americans*, Wendell Logan reflects on the status of black musicians in America: “Is it a myth that black people have made significant contributions in American music? No, it is not a myth. That is factual. In terms of so-called vernacular music, the evidence is there, beginning with the blues, going through jazz, in religious music. It is everywhere, in terms of our contributions. I would go so far as to say there probably wouldn’t be any real identifiable—from a world perspective—American music if it weren’t for black music. In so-called concert music, that becomes a little more difficult to say. I think what we can do is look at the careers.” Logan is a modest man. He refrains from offering his own career as a case study in the contributions of African American composers to contemporary music, but in fact his works provide resounding evidence both of what musicologist Sam Floyd calls “the power of black music” and of Logan’s own power to transcend color lines.

Born and raised in rural Georgia, Logan found himself in Tallahassee at Florida A&M University in the late 1960s, supported by an athletic scholarship, proficient in a variety of instruments, and already having composed arrangements for his high school band. At the time, Florida A&M was a state-supported black university, and upon arrival Logan was greeted by a vibrant and eclectic musical community. He recalls being especially impressed by the metric complexity and melodic invention of the young Olly Wilson, who served as a musical mentor and friend. Logan points out: “We had some of the best black musicians in the country teaching there, simply because they couldn’t teach anywhere else. The other interesting thing was that all of them played jazz. . . We saw them operating in the clubs and on the concert stage. There was no distinction between classical and jazz.

You just didn’t hear that. . . Something I remember [pianist/arranger] Charlie Cox saying, “This is what Ravel and Debussy are doing, and it is closely related to our music.’ You heard those kinds of things, but there was no comparative sense, like, this is better than that, or this is more difficult than that. . . and I am grateful for that to this day.”

The creative union of principles from the jazz and classical spheres has marked Logan’s output from the very beginning. Among his earliest works are relatively abstract creations based on the manipulation of small melodic cells. Yet in his *Proportions* (1968, for chamber ensemble) the alternation of rhythmically fixed and rhythmically free sections works to create “a spontaneous character” with material that is still “compositionally fixed.” Ten years later, in *Duo Exchanges* for clarinet and percussion, the performers break free from traditional music notation in solo sections that have “a definite swing character” but still remain carefully controlled. Logan notes: “the players are not at liberty to just ‘blow’; the improvisations are governed by musical context and such other controls as dynamic and melodic shape (specified graphically), and a pitch series from which melodic material is to be extracted.” In subsequent decades, improvisation—or the impression of improvisation—has given Logan’s pieces both a sense of spontaneity and, perhaps more important, an emphasis on attentive ensemble interaction. In the words of Bay Area conductor Michael Morgan, “It’s not improvisation exactly, but his way of notating offers the freedom of improvisation, so it takes a lot of figuring out who should move next, what to listen for as a cue. A lot of conversation is required by the ensemble to work all this out.”

Not surprisingly, some of Logan’s most moving music treats facets of black experience in the United States. He has consistently favored the writings of African Americans: *Songs of Our Time* (1969) sets the poetry of W. E. Du Bois, LeRoi Jones, and Gwendolyn Brooks; and his recent work for big band, soprano and tenor (premiered as part of Cleveland’s Tri-C Jazz Festival in 2002) takes as its text portions of Langston Hughes’s *Ask Your Mama: Twelve Moods for Jazz*, portions that Hughes himself had indicated should receive musical elaboration. In what might be considered Logan’s masterwork, *Runagate, Runagate* (1990 with chamber ensemble; 1994, for full orchestra), the collage poem of esteemed African American poet Robert Hayden inspired a

dynamic depiction of the thoughts, feelings and physical sensations of a “runagate,” or fugitive slave—most memorably created on stage by tenor William Brown. Logan writes of his response to the poem’s “inherently musical qualities: the frenetic ‘beat’ of a train (symbolic of the Underground Railroad); the unmistakable melodic character, resulting from repetition of lines and phrases and the use of lines from spirituals (Mean, mean, mean to be free and And before I’ll be a slave, I’ll be buried in my grave); and finally, the imagery of the poem . . .”

References to jazz and blues idioms have also informed Logan’s instrumental music—subtly in such early works as the *Five Pieces for Piano* (1977), whose second and fourth movements present blues-based melodic material, and more explicitly in later years. In 1991, he completed *Roots, Branches, Shapes and Shades (of Green)* commissioned by the Cleveland Chamber Symphony. A companion piece to *Return of the Collard People* (1988, for dancers and tape), this work is a chamber concerto for pianist Neal Creque, and while it does not tell a definite story, according to the composer, “some of its main concerns are about maintaining and reaffirming ‘roots’. In this case this refers to the actual music and the spirit of the music that I learned as a child: long meter hymns, spirituals, blues and jazz. Although the piece is actually none of these things, its spirit is about all of them.” More generally, Logan writes of America’s black music, “Those traditions certainly influence my work in terms of feeling, sound, and, first of all, attitude. The blues for me is about everything. It means that you have got everything at your disposal. In fact, I consider myself to be a blues musician, that is what I am.”

Logan’s recent music continues to instill music in a wide variety of genres with a blues “attitude.” His opera *Doxology Chronicles: The Doxy Canticles*, with libretto by Paul Carter Harrison was presented by the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art and the Center for Black Music Research, and a new work commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts for speaker and orchestra is based on one of the sermons from James Weldon Johnson’s *God’s Trombones*. In addition to receiving a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1991 and being a fellow at the Rockefeller Center in Bellagio, Italy in 1994, Logan has won the Cleveland Arts Prize, four grants from the National Endowment for

the Arts, numerous ASCAP awards, grants from the Ohio Arts Council, and the Lakond Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His music has been performed by such groups as Boston Musica Viva, Synchronia, the Dallas, Cleveland Chamber, and Savannah Symphonies, the Black Music Repertoire Ensemble, and members of the Atlanta and St. Louis Symphonies. He is presently Chair of the department of Jazz Studies and Professor of Composition at Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

Transition (2005)

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

According to the composer, *Transition* “solidifies some of the concepts and methods employed in a number of recent pieces. One of the overriding concerns in composing the piece was to attempt to capture some of the rhythmic vitality, flexibility, and spontaneity of modern jazz. Structurally, the composition is written as a continuous movement with several contrasting episodes, including solos (for flute, bass clarinet and violin), and duos (for piano/percussion and viola/cello).”

Like much of Logan’s music, *Transition* involves elements of controlled freedom. In this case, the piece is punctuated by two short refrains during which ensemble members are repeatedly interrupted—by the percussionist during the first refrain, by both percussion and piano during the second. Each improvised interruption initiates a stuttering return to the refrain’s opening creating an effect that the composer compares to “a scratched recording.” Here and elsewhere in the work, elastic rhythms and shifting alliances among the performers mark *Transition* as a thoughtful but exuberant rhapsody.

KEN UENO (B. 1970)

Though he expresses them nonchalantly, Ken Ueno's goals as a composer are sweeping. In conversation with James Parker of the Boston Globe, he states: "I just want to offer people, for this 15 to 20 minutes of their time, which is not going to come again, an experience—some sort of life-changing excitement." Ueno's words link him at once to American experimentalist John Cage and to rock icon Jimi Hendrix—and his music invites similar associations: deeply engaged with every wavelength on the spectrum between sound and noise, imaginative to the point of eccentricity, pulsing with the desire to reinvigorate relationships between composers, performers, and audiences.

Ueno was born in New York, but thanks to his father's job with a Japanese airline, he spent parts of his childhood in Japan and Switzerland, before attending high school in California. Although he was always musical, he envisioned a life in politics and enrolled in the officer training program at West Point until an injury sidelined this phase of his career and pushed him to embrace his artistic side. Playing guitar in rock bands quickly evolved into songwriting, which took him to the Berklee College of Music, where he studied composition, big band arranging, and film scoring. Subsequent education at Boston University, Yale University and Harvard University brought him into contact with such teachers as Lukas Foss, Martin Bresnick, Bun-Ching Lam, Ned Rorem, Evan Ziporyn, Mario Davidovsky, and Bernard Rands. This is a distinguished list, to be sure, yet Ueno's music clearly shows his eagerness to strike out on his own. Subsequent work with Frederic Rzewski at the Conservatory Royal de Liège and at the annual Composition Course at IRCAM are perhaps more indicative of defining traits in his oeuvre: an emphasis on the social meanings of musical performance and an embrace of musical technology.

A glance at the composer's catalog will reveal a number of surprising sound sources, ranging from soda cans and boomboxes to Big Bird toys and digital radio alarm clocks. Even his more conventional ensembles make many unusual sounds, whether through extended

performance techniques or through electronic enhancement. One of the most striking features of Ueno's output is that so many of his pieces involve microphones. For him, amplification is not about loudness. Nor is it solely about a connection to the world of rock—though he has been known to give Hendrix credit for setting him on the path toward composition. Instead, Ueno writes: "What's cool is that amplification works to make more apparent the inherent qualities in the physicality of sound which, without amplification, we are less aware of: it brings out the internal beatings (and therefore the tempos) within certain intervals; it allows for the possibility of bringing out different overtones from changing only the bowing position; it brings out the artifacts of production noise. These qualities I find beautiful and in contrast to the hierarchical dominance of pitch/harmony in western Classical music." In *Age of Aircraft* (2002), for example, an amplified and distorted cello part is meant to blend seamlessly with electronic sounds; in *whatWALL* (2003) "a gradual build-up of electronic sounds (initially sounding like resonance but later transforming into a more independent layer of sound). . . eventually surrounds the audience in quadraphonic space (a sonic 'wall' around the audience)."

While Ueno's works are formed of interesting sounds, they employ equally interesting ways of structuring musical form. Written in honor of the late Toru Takemitsu (the most famous composer to unite Japanese and Western influences), Ueno's *Kaze-no-Oka* (Hill of the Winds) involves an extractable cadenza for biwa (lute) and shakuhachi (end-blown flute). The 2001 sextet *Pharmakon* involves three "pre-movements" which may be played in any order and which function like misplaced windows into the subsequent "main" movement. Other works draw formal principles from literary models (particularly the works of Samuel Beckett), from alphabetic codes (including both phonetic and ideographic systems), and even from ergonomics (in which musical decisions take into account the approximate comfort or discomfort level of the intended performer). In the end, Ueno's idiosyncratic mixture of resources can best be summed up in his own words for the Boston Globe: "I think the attempts to politicize the differences between types or classes of music are less relevant for my generation than they ever were. . . There's a level of commonality between Metallica and Bartók—some grammatical differences, sure, but at the visceral level they're the same. I mean, when I play

Xenakis to my friends in LA who are in heavy metal bands—they get it. It’s just gritty fantastic music.”

In addition to winning the prestigious Rome Prize, Ueno has received awards from the Aaron Copland House, Sonic Circuits X, and Fondazione Russolo-Pratella, as well as commissions from the Fromm Foundation, the Hopkins Center, and Meet the Composer. His music has been performed by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, eighth blackbird, the Prism Quartet, and the American Composers Orchestra, and his *Shiroi Ishi* (White Stone) (2001), written for the Hilliard Ensemble, remains in their repertory as they tour worldwide. He currently serves as co-director of the Minimum Security Composers Collective, which he helped to found in 1998. He also performs regularly as vocalist with the improvisational group Onda and hosts the Cambridge public access television program *The Modern Music Show with DJ Moderne*. He is currently completing a chamber orchestra work for the Netherlands Youth Orchestra and a multimedia theater piece for violist Kim Kashkashian and percussionist Robyn Schulkowsky, meant to serve as a companion piece to Luciano Berio’s *Naturale*. He is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth.

. . . *blood blossoms* . . . (2002)

for amplified bass clarinet, electric guitar, percussion, piano, cello, and double bass

“The old junky found a vein. . . blood blossoms in the dropper like a Chinese flower. . .” These words from William Burroughs’s non-linear novel *Naked Lunch* lend Ueno’s amplified sextet its title. By making reference to Burroughs—literary innovator, compulsive drug addict, and mentor (of sorts) to Alan Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac—Ueno allies himself with a certain anti-establishment stance. By choosing *Naked Lunch* in particular, he also celebrates the testing of, and triumph over, attempts at artistic censorship. But the composer’s intent might be considered more philosophical than political, to the extent that the two can be separated. He writes: “The Burroughs text made me think that beauty can be found in a medium full of potential power and destruction. In writing for an amplified ensemble, I sought to create delicate textures that played against the incipient power of amplification and distortion.”

The beauty of . . . *blood blossoms* . . . is dark indeed. The low strings skitter with improvised flurries of atonal or highly chromatic notes, clustered in glistening harmonics or played with the ghostly tone colors of sul ponticello bowing (next to the bridge of the instrument); the electric guitar is transfigured by mistuning (or scordatura) and distortion; the bass clarinet must perform such unnatural acts as humming, whistling, and “slap-tongue” articulations; and the piano is rendered strange by the insertion of foreign objects (rocks, felt, etc.) so that its upper register resembles a miniature percussion ensemble. And yet, as these “disfigured” individuals interact, something both exotic and organic seems to unfold. . . . *blood blossoms* . . . was written for the Bang on a Can All-Stars, who premiered the work in 2002.

ROBERTO MORALES-MANZANARES (B. 1958)

From the Aztec ceramic flute to the modern flute, from the sixteenth-century Veracruz harp to its contemporary counterpart, from the modern piano to the computer keyboard, Roberto Morales-Manzanares possesses a toolkit for composition as diverse as the human imagination could devise. Known for his skills as an improviser on many instruments, and for his innovative multimedia contributions, he offers music—and a musical philosophy—that merges the most up-to-date technology with the ancient art of instrumental improvisation.

After studying guitar and music theory as a child in Mexico City, he quickly expanded his instrumental interests to include a variety of folkloric flutes and stringed instruments, especially harps (the *chamula*, the *arpa grande*, and the *jarocho*, among others). Professional training in flute, piano, and composition at the Escuela Superior de Música was matched by self-guided exploration of new instruments and collaborative artistic ventures. As early as 1981, he founded an interdisciplinary workshop uniting music, painting, literature, and dance, and when this group disbanded in 1984, he established the group Alacrán del Cántaro (Scorpion of the Vessel), which will resume under his direction upon his return to Mexico. Morales-

Manzanares first came to national prominence in Mexico through his incidental music for Shakespeare's *King Lear*. One of the first full-fledged uses of electronic music to complement the spoken theater, this project brought him to the attention of dancers and choreographers across Mexico. He continues to enjoy, as he puts it, "living in another discipline" and learning from the varied approaches that artists in other media bring to such basic concepts as timing and gesture.

In recent years, Morales-Manzanares has made especially important contributions to the development of computer programs that allow real-time interaction between dancers and musicians. Together with composers and co-authors Eduardo Morales, Roger Dannenberg, and Jonathan Berger, he described the possibilities of this new program, SICIB, for the readers of the *Computer Music Journal* (2001): "Traditionally, music and dance have been complementary arts. However, their integration has not always been entirely satisfactory. In general, a dancer must conform movements to a predefined piece of music, leaving very little room for improvisational creativity." By contrast, the SICIB program gathers information from sensors attached to dancers to link choreographic gestures ("such as position, velocity, acceleration, curvature, and torsion of movements") with specific, pre-recorded musical materials and with changes in dynamic intensity, tone color, articulation, and so forth. For example, in Morales-Manzanares's own *Trio de cuatro* (Trio of four) flute, clarinet, and piano are enhanced by electronically sampled sounds that are shaped during the performance by the dancer's location on stage: silence reigns while the dancer moves within a central, cylindrical space, but as soon as the sensors on his or her wrists touch the imaginary "walls" of this cylinder, noises emerge—defined partly by the performer's distance from stage center, and partly by a set of rules that the dancer can alter, for example, by leaping above a certain height.

In these and other works, Morales-Manzanares considers himself an electronic luthier (a maker of stringed instruments). "I can't see myself writing piano sonatas," he says: "I mean, they might sound good, but I need to explore different ways of living with modernity." He compares working with electronics to building an entirely new instrument and then becoming a virtuoso performer on that instrument. Only by spending time exploring a particular, electronically created "environment" can one answer practical performance questions: what is the ideal distance between live performer and microphone? Should the electronically sampled sounds approximate the clarity of live music or should a certain amount of distortion mark their dif-

ference? Because he typically performs his own pieces, he is also aware that these decisions have physical consequences on stage—they impact not only the emerging music but also the choreography of the piece in question. Retaining control over this choreography is important, but far more important is the freedom to interact with audiences that Morales-Manzanares enjoys when he brings his own music to life on stage. After all, he observes, "A musician is not a machine."

In addition to publishing numerous articles on his sound processing programs, Morales-Manzanares has been invited to speak and perform at the Foro Internacional de Musica, the International Computer Music Conference, the International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Holland's Space Music Festival, the Gothenberg Art Sound Festival, U. C. San Diego, and San Jose State, Yale, Columbia and McGill Universities. He has received commissions from the ensembles LOOS, Wire Works, and the Symphony Orchestra of Guanajuato, and his improvising skills have led to collaborations with Manuel Enriquez, George Lewis, Mari Kimura, Ake Parmerud, and DJ Spooky, among others. In 1988, Morales-Manzanares co-founded the first computer music studio in Mexico at the Escuela Superior de Música, and four years later he founded the Laboratorio Informática Musical at the University of Guanajuato; he has also organized such festivals as Mexico City's "The Computer and Music" and Guanajuato's "Noise Alley." After visiting the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies at U. C. Berkeley [CNMAT] in 1994 as composer in residence, he returned to Berkeley in 2001 where he is currently pursuing a Ph. D. in composition under Edmund Campion and David Wessel. He is also a former member of Mexico's Sistema Nacional de Creadores.

Cenzontle (Mockingbird) (2004)

for flute, live electronics, and video

Among Morales-Manzanares's many electro-acoustic works, *Cenzontle* represents a particularly close twinning of live and synthesized sound; he notes that it reflects his "experiences in a world populated with acoustic, pseudo-acoustic, and synthetic instruments." The title is a native Nahuatl word referring to a mockingbird from Oaxaca—a "bird of four hundred voices." The flutist on stage plays the central role in organizing and structuring the piece in "real time" (i.e. as the piece unfolds in performance). The performer's physical gestures, tone color, and dynamic level signal the computer to select and alter pre-recorded flute sounds. Like many of Morales-

Manzanares's works, *Cenzontle* involves (or can involve) substantial elements of improvisation. Although the score may be performed "as written," the soloist is encouraged to memorize the notated phrases and then take them as the basis for his own flights of fancy.

Given the title and instrumentation, listeners may expect the composer's natural selection of warbling trills, fluttering breaths, whistling, whispering, and partially-pitched overtones. The video components, too, involve a kaleidoscopic array of outdoor images—petals, pebbles, water, and wings. More novel are the changes in aural and visual perspectives enabled by Morales-Manzanares's computer software. Thanks to sensors placed on the flute itself, the video material changes in response to the performer's movements. At the same time, the electronic sounds emerge from speakers selected on the basis of the flutist's own orientation in space—panning from left to right in coordination with the live performer and, in effect, magnifying the artist's engagement with the audience.

The composer wishes to thank Adrian Freed, research director of CNMAT "for his directions and brilliant solutions in the sensor environment of the piece" and Don Buchla "for sharing ideas, imagination and outstanding environmental music during our conversations."

JASON ECKARDT (B. 1971)

Jason Eckardt writes: "Long before I was a composer, I was a listener. Listening has always shaped my compositional decisions, and it has always been the primary influence on the evolution of my compositional techniques. The intense investigation of the nature of listening—in particular, trying to comprehend how I understand the music that I hear—has most powerfully molded the way that I write music." Eckardt's music indeed invites listening with wide-open ears; it also reminds us that there is beauty to be found in complexity. "I am not attempting to create a music that is maximally cognitively transparent," he notes, "this is not the kind of music that interests me."

As the story goes, Eckardt was a typical young guitarist in rock and jazz

bands until he discovered the music of Anton Webern, at which point "he immediately devoted himself to composition." Webern proved an apt catalyst, for Eckardt shares with him a fascination for the systematic transformations inherent to serialist composition, a careful calibration of performance nuances, and a preference for the textural clarity of chamber music over the massive forces of the symphony orchestra. Eckardt went on to graduate from Berklee College of Music and to earn his D. M. A. in composition from Columbia University; he has also participated in masterclasses with Milton Babbitt, James Dillon, Brian Ferneyhough, Jonathan Harvey and Karlheinz Stockhausen. Shortly after receiving his doctorate, he co-founded New York City's Ensemble 21, which has premiered more than thirty new works and which in 1999 became the first American ensemble to collaborate in concert with IRCAM.

Given his impeccable avant-garde credentials, it is no surprise to find a certain emphasis on abstraction in Eckardt's music: his pitches are often chosen via the most rigorous of arithmetic processes and their deployment into larger, hierarchical structures draws on insights from cognitive psychology and the empirical evidence of his own expert ear. For example, in his 1999 marimba solo *Transience*, musical form is shaped by "extended metastatic processes" and in the chamber work *Polarities* (1998), "various states of opposition" are "mediated by processes whose completion or disintegration marks formal boundaries within the work" Yet in these and other scores, Eckardt also explores core ideas that are far more intuitive than they are scientific. His catalog even includes a "protest piece," *16*, for amplified flute and string trio, written in response to President George W. Bush's 2003 State of the Union Address. Perhaps most remarkable is the composer's ecstatic *Tongues* (2001, for soprano and chamber ensemble), which attempts to capture the experience of "glossolalia" or "speaking in tongues"; it evokes "the volatile grip of possession that is said to hold the human vessels through which the divine or supernatural passes," reflecting an overall "transformation from self-awareness to rapture."

In academic settings, Eckardt tends to describe his music in the technical languages of "set theory," "pitch classes," and "combinatoriality," but he is well aware of the immediate, and even visceral impact of his music. For an articulation of these insights we can turn to no less an authority than Marilyn Nonken—pianist devoted to new music, theorist with a Ph. D. from Columbia University, co-founder of Ensemble 21, and not incidentally Eckardt's wife. Describing his early piano solo *Echoes' White Veil*, she

offers her own interpretation of the Eckardt aesthetic: “Most strikingly, there is the complexity of the surface, which expresses itself in constant cascades of notes, sudden and extreme shifts of texture, and fluid, exotic rhythms. In these aspects, the piece pays homage to the composers of the New Complexity movement such as Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Finnis, and James Dillon. . .As in the works of these composers, the complexity is something you can taste. Performance-wise, it is a constant and provoking challenge to achieve the level of detail the score demands: the clarity of articulation, the infinite degrees of dynamic and rhythmic subtlety, and the sheer physicality required to get around the keyboard. The effort required to play the piece is an integral part of its aesthetic. Yet I don’t see performing *Echoes*’ so much as a struggle as a spiritual high. In its performance, the physical is ennobled, as it is in ballet or the forms of modern dance that require, in addition to artistic sensitivity, physical discipline.”

Eckardt has received commissions from Carnegie Hall, the Koussevitzky Foundation, the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and percussionist Evelyn Glennie, for whom he wrote his only orchestral score to date: *Reul na Coille* (2002). His honors include awards from the League of Composers/ISCM, the Aaron Copland Fund, the New York State Council on the Arts, ASCAP and the Alice M. Ditson Fund, as well as fellowships from the Guggenheim and Rockefeller Foundations, the MacDowell and Millay Colonies, and the Fritz Reiner Center for Contemporary Music, among others. He is currently working on a piece for bass clarinet and piano, commissioned by SUNY Buffalo for Jean Kopperud and an evening-long cycle of works titled *Undersong*.

***After Serra* (2000)**

for flute/bass flute, clarinet/bass clarinet, violin, cello, and piano

For those familiar with the sculptures of Richard Serra—his vaulting tower “Charlie Brown” (1999) stands in the center of San Francisco’s Gap Inc. Building—it should come as no surprise that Eckardt’s *After Serra* is active and richly textured music. A Bay Area native, Serra is known for his use of industrial materials (reminiscent of the West Coast shipyards and steel mills where he once worked) and for his emphasis on the physical actions of art-making. Serra recalls beginning his early creations with

“a verb list”: “to roll, to fold, to cut, to dangle, to twist. . .I really just worked out pieces in relation to the verb list physically in a space. . .basically it gives [me] a way of proceeding with material in relation to body movement, in relation to making, that divorces from any notion of metaphor, any notion of easy imagery.” One can hear this same hard-edged physicality in *After Serra*, particularly if one replaces the concrete verbs of Serra’s list with slightly more abstract ones: to collide, to diverge, to persist, to yield.

The composer writes, “. . .I seek to convey in sound the simultaneous imposition and precariousness that I perceive in [Serra’s] pieces. Serra’s sculptures overwhelm the observer with their massive dimensions and sharply defined form. At the same time, they appear as if they might, with the slightest disturbance, collapse. As Serra’s work disrupts the observer’s sense of physical balance, *After Serra* is similarly conceived to undermine the listener’s sense of temporal stability. My composition attempts to thwart expectations of formal and gestural continuity, juxtaposing a volatile and restless surface with steadily unfolding underlying processes. While *After Serra* may appear to be surging toward a more secure environment as it draws to an end, the conclusion may in fact be more disturbingly fragile than the violent outbursts of the opening.”

After Serra was commissioned by the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University and dedicated to Roger Redgate and Ensemble Exposé (London), who gave its premiere in 2000.

--Beth E. Levy

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.

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.

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.

The Ensemble

The **San Francisco Contemporary Music Players** (SFCMP), now in its 36th 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 68 pieces and performed over 1,000 new works, including 56 U.S. and 130 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.

The ensemble thanks **William T. Wiley** for his donation of an edition variée of 32 prints. The prints were made at **Trillium Press** as part of the Press's Venture Philanthropy program.
Eight remain available for sale.

Price: \$2500 not including tax. 100% of the sales price benefits the
San Francisco Contemporary Music Players

Additional Listening and Reading

Works by **Donnacha Dennehy** can be found on the CDs *Contemporary Music from Ireland, vol. 3* (Contemporary Music Centre), percussionist Tatiana Koleva's album *Knock on Wood* (Nova Linea), and *New Works for Percussion* performed by the Slagwerkgroep Den Haag (SDH). Joanna MacGregor plays *p.At* on the CD *By the New Time* issued by Silverdoor.

Runagate, Runagate by **Wendell Logan** can be heard in a fine recording featuring William Brown and the Lawrence Conservatory Contemporary Music Ensemble (CRI). *Roots, Branches, Shapes and Shades (of Green)* is available on a CD of the Cleveland Chamber Symphony (Troy/Albany). In addition, Logan is one of more than forty African American musicians featured in William Banfield's *Musical Landscapes in Color: Conversations with Black Americans* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003).

Roberto Morales-Manzanares has collaborated with violinist Mari Kimura to produce the CD *Leyendas* (Victo) featuring duo improvisations for a huge variety of Latin American and European instruments. The composer's performance of *Servicio a Domicilio* (for piano and live electronics) at the Mexico City's 1991 "The Computer and Music" Festival can be heard on a CD published by the music journal *Leonardo*, and *Naubal II* (1992, for chamula harp and electronics) appears on a CD issued by the 1992 International Computer Music Conference.

Together with other works by **Jason Eckardt**, *After Serra* can be heard on a CD titled *Out of Chaos* (Mode) featuring performances by members of Ensemble 21. Pianist Marilyn Nonken has recorded his "Echoes White Veil" for CRI, flutist Nancy Ruffer performs "Multiplicities" on the Metier label, and Makoto Nakura plays his marimba solo "Transience" on a Helicon CD. Pianist Amy Dissanayake's forthcoming *Tango* CD also includes Eckardt's "Tango Clandestino."

--Beth E. Levy