

SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS

David Milnes, Music Director

Monday, 19 November 2007, 8 pm
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum

SHIMMERS AND THRILLS

HENRIK STRINDBERG *Cheap Thrills* (1993)

(Approximate duration: 9 minutes)

United States Premiere

ANDERS HILLBORG *Tryffelbrym (Truffle Hymn)* (2002)

(Approximate duration: 5 minutes)

United States Premiere

YAN MARESZ *Entrelacs (Interlacing)* (1997-1998)

(Approximate duration: 13 minutes)

~ INTERMISSION ~

JESPER NORDIN *calm like a bomb* (2000)

(Approximate duration: 10 minutes)

Graeme Jennings, violin

TOMMY ZWEDBERG *Enso* (1993)

(Approximate duration: 9 minutes) (10pt.)

United States Premiere

LIZA LIM *Shimmer Songs* (2006)

(Approximate duration: 13 minutes)

World Premiere: Commissioned for the San Francisco Contemporary Music
Players by the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University.

Performers

Tod Brody, flute
Carey Bell, clarinet (Maresz)
Peter Josheff, clarinet (Strindberg, Zwedberg)
Hall Goff, trombone
Karen Gottlieb, harp
Julie Steinberg, piano (Maresz)
Karen Rosenak, piano (Strindberg, Hillborg, Zwedberg)
William Winant, percussion (Lim)
Daniel Kennedy, percussion (Maresz, Lim)
Christopher Froh, percussion (Strindberg, Zwedberg, Lim)
Graeme Jennings, violin (Lim)
Roy Malan, violin (Hillborg)
Susan Freier, violin (Lim)
Nanci Severance, viola
Stephen Harrison, cello (Lim, Hillborg)
Leighton Fong, cello (Maresz)
Richard Worn, contrabass

We offer special thanks to:

*The Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation for support of performances of music by
Swedish composers.*

*The Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard for underwriting the commissioning of Liza
Lim's Shimmer Songs and helping to support its premiere performance.*

*The French-American Fund for Contemporary Music, a program of FACE with major
support from SACEM and BMG Music Publishing for helping to underwrite the per-
formance of Yan Marez's Entrelacs.*

*The Thord-Gray Memorial Fund of the American-Scandinavian Foundation for sup-
port of performances of music from Sweden.*

Steinway Piano provided by Sherman Clay Concert Event Series.

Not the singer, not the song

Three prints remain for sale out of the series of 32 that the artist, **William T. Wiley**, generously donated to the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

Price: \$2500, not including tax.
100% of the sales prices benefits the ensemble.

We thank the artist and Electric Works
for their extraordinary support.

Join us for a reception in the lobby following the concert.
Scores from tonight's program are also on display there.

HENRIK STRINDBERG (B. 1954)

Leading off our celebration of contemporary Swedish composers is Henrik Strindberg, perhaps the most unusual figure on our program because he combines an interest in computers with his international prominence as a rock musician and his love of the violin. Wide-ranging from the start, Strindberg grew up playing not just violin, but also recorder, saxophone, piano, and both electric and classical guitar! In 1972, he joined the progressive rock group Ragnarök, which (after the re-release of an album in South Korea in the 1990s) has enjoyed an upsurge in popularity—a new CD will soon be released on a French label. Their concert schedule has brought Strindberg to such venues as Stockholm's Fasching Jazz Club, but he is equally at home at Europe's major new music festivals.

Strindberg studied composition with Gunnar Bucht, Pär Lindgren, Arne Mellnäs, and Sven-David Sandström at Stockholm's Royal College of Music, where he also learned a great deal from icon of "new complexity," Brian Ferneyhough, who came to the College as a Visiting Professor. During the mid-1980s, Strindberg traveled to Greece to study with composer (and trained architect) Iannis Xenakis at the Centre Acanthes, and in 1987, he moved to Paris for two years, making intermittent visits to IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique), whose summer courses he would attend in 1995. Given this background, it should come as no surprise that, according to Swedish critic Rolf Haglund, Strindberg's scores present an "architecturally sophisticated investigation of polyphonic sounds and rhythmic patterns." Yet Strindberg also enjoys what he calls a "deep and sensual contact with the wonderful instruments and the sounds that they produce. My violin is always on my desk when finishing for the day."

Strindberg himself identifies sound ("harmonics, noise and filtering") and rhythm as his most enduring musical preoccupations: "Is rhythm physical and related to our bodies, or is rhythm something more abstract, like patterns? . . . How is it divided on macro and micro levels?" Each of the composer's works provides its own answer to such questions. In

Ursprung/Gläntor (Origins/Glades) (1993), for example, the composer assigns to percussion instruments (Indian *baya*, Nigerian *udu*, and crotales) a series of “macrorhythmic periods,” that are at first too long to be grasped, but that gradually “collapse” into comprehensibility. In the piano trio *Cut Sections. Time Freezes* (2005), Strindberg adds an architectural and geographical aspect to his explorations. The rhythmic “motto” is devised from the way the two string players use their bows to create arpeggios; but the larger structure of the piece involves imagining in sound the exposed cross-section of a ruined church in the medieval town of Visby (on the island of Gotland) and interrupting the arpeggio-laden momentum with instants of icy repose.

Some of Strindberg’s most interesting conceptions rely on new media not just for their technical underpinning, but even for their subject matter. In *This Road to Baghdad* (2003), for example, Strindberg weaves a techno-political collage from six sound-bites excerpted from television coverage of the war in Iraq. More abstractly, his score *Etymology* (commissioned by the Swedish Radio) bears movement titles taken from computer code. The composer recalls the circumstances of its inception: “This meant daily reading in my C language reference manual and the five (by then) volumes of *Inside Macintosh*. As I was living in Paris at the time I was surrounded by foreign languages. The simple words of everyday English which are being used to symbolize instructions to the computer, those words started to have lives of their own. Their meaning became elusive as my interest focused more on the human mind and less on memory allocation, garbage collection and error checking.” The composer is also sensitive to more conventionally “literary” texts, having set the poetry of his countryman Bruno K. Öijer (b. 1951, associated with the 1970s avant-garde group “Vesuvius”) in a piece for live electronics *Utvald* (Chosen) (1998) and in the more recent cycle *I thought someone came* (2004).

Strindberg’s commissions have come from the New Juilliard Ensemble, the Dutch Nieuw Ensemble, and Norway’s Cikada, and his music has been performed at important festivals in Scandinavia and around the world, including the 2006 MoMA Summergarden concerts, which opened with *Cut Sections. Time Freezes*. In 2004, Strindberg’s CD *Within Trees* was honored as Record of the Year by three Swedish newspapers. In addition to playing with Ragnarök, he keeps busy as a composition teacher at the Gotland School of Music Composition and the Gotland Baltic Music

Academy and as a member of the Royal Academy of Music, while also serving on the boards of the Society of Swedish Composers and other important groups.

***Cheap Thrills* (1993)**

for alto flute, bass clarinet, percussion, piano and computer

Strindberg explains the title of his *Cheap Thrills* as a play of references, “to famous musicians, working methods, attitudes.” Evoking not just Janis Joplin’s essential rock LP and Frank Zappa’s compilation CD, it also involves the manipulation of a three-pitch fragment taken from the album *The Jewel in the Lotus* by legendary woodwind artist Bennie Maupin (also to be heard in Miles Davis’s *Bitches Brew* and Herbie Hancock’s Mwandishi and Headhunters bands). In Strindberg’s eyes, *Cheap Thrills* “seems to live a strange life of its own.” This is true in part because the work borrows from the jazz world not just its distinctive tone colors (vibraphone, alto flute, and bass clarinet), but also an air of improvisation, even though its score is quite rigorous.

Each ensemble will bring something new to *Cheap Thrills*, which was commissioned by the Samtida Musik society for KammarensembleN, but in every incarnation its progress through time will be organized around the clearly audible motive of a falling minor third, as stated by the alto flute at the outset and answered or “completed” by the vibraphone. This delicate and often melancholy line floats amid a more active, scattered ensemble of percussive piano sounds, tom-toms, and thundersheets whose distinctive timbres are replicated by the electronics. Only once does the flutist break free of this austere but varied texture. Apart from this rhapsodic passage (marked “freely,” but fully notated), Strindberg offers a quiet counterpoint of gestures fascinating in its interplay of what critic Christopher Ballantine calls “lovely sonic auras.”

ANDERS HILLBORG (B. 1954)

Anders Hillborg has the distinction of being one of the Swedish composers best known to recent Californian audiences. Last November, the San Francisco Symphony programmed his *Liquid Marble*, and in May 2006 the Los Angeles Philharmonic gave the world premiere of *Eleven Gates* at Walt Disney Concert Hall and later brought the work to the Bay Area. Some of this exposure is surely due to the persuasive advocacy of conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen, a lifelong colleague and friend. But more can be credited to Hillborg's ability to be inviting without abandoning innovation, to appeal without ever becoming cliché. In his scores, critics have found "consummate craftsmanship and elemental originality" and "hugely entertaining, sonically enveloping music." As Alan Rich put it for the *Los Angeles Weekly*, "Hurrah, that people still create music that way."

Hillborg's performance experience came via choral singing and rock bands that also experimented with improvisation. Beginning in 1976, he attended Stockholm's Royal College of Music learning counterpoint, composition, and electronics with many of the same teachers as Henrik Strindberg. Like Strindberg, he benefitted tremendously from Brian Ferneyhough's presence in Stockholm but, more quickly than Strindberg, Hillborg chose to channel his fascination with complicated musical textures into works for traditional instruments. James M. Keller, program annotator for the San Francisco Symphony describes Hillborg's trajectory: "At the beginning of his career, Hillborg explored both acoustic and electronic media, but electronic instruments and modifications largely disappeared from his compositions by the end of the 1980s. Nonetheless, certain techniques born of electronic music became subsumed into his ongoing method, such as a propensity for layering material into a complex tapestry, much as a studio producer might do with the several tracks of a typical rock recording."

This creative layering can be heard in *Liquid Marble*, written (amazingly) for a high quality Scandinavian youth orchestra, which gave the premiere at an outdoor concert in Finland in 1995. Here one finds the superimposition of spectral string chords, continuous glissandi, and unusual vibrato

effects for clarinet that the composer learned from a busker who was playing for cash in the Stockholm subway system. As these "noisy" sounds suggest, Hillborg is particularly interested in microtonal effects—in exploring the spaces in between the pitches of, say, a piano keyboard. In his *Celestial Mechanics* (1983-85), for string orchestra, he requires seventeen different "de-tunings" for the seventeen different string parts, each of which operates at up to a half-step higher or lower than normal pitch. Similarly, in *Clang and Fury* (1985-89), each of the families of the orchestra (brass, strings, etc.) operates with its own idea of what counts as "in tune."

Perhaps because of the unusual, even eerie sounds that result from Hillborg's microtonality and unpredictable sonic combinations, his music has often been associated with the fantastic or the surreal. A work like *Eleven Gates* bolsters these associations with its juxtaposition of eleven, pointedly contrasting sections bearing such subtitles as "Drifting into D major," "Suddenly in the Room with Chattering Mirrors," "Confused Dialogues with Woodpecker," "Toy Pianos on the Surface of the Sea," and "Waves, Pulse, and Elastic Seabirds." Stronger still in its surreal connotations is Hillborg's orchestral essay *Exquisite Corpse* (2002, performed by the San Francisco Symphony in 2003), which takes its title from a phrase born in a parlor game of the 1920s, in which each player secretly contributed a noun, verb, adjective, etc. to create a "prose poem" that might reflect some kind of message from the collective unconscious. This uncanny bringing together of diverse elements is an apt metaphor for Hillborg's vision of his own creativity: "my compositions range from conventional rock music to wild experiments with microtonal structures, and, as opposed to previous generations of composers, maybe, I see no conflict in working with musical concepts so far apart. Experiment and tradition are not separate, but are constantly intertwined in the process of composing. Maybe a Stravinskian attitude."

Although Hillborg has held occasional teaching posts, for example at the Malmö College of Music in 1990, he has lived essentially as a freelance composer since the early 1980s. He won the Christ Johnson Music Prize of the Royal Swedish Academy in 1991, and his Violin Concerto and *Celestial Mechanics* were honored in the 1990s at the UNESCO Composers' Rostrum, where his orchestral score *Dreaming River* took first prize in 2002. In 1995, Hillborg won a Swedish Grammy award as Composer of

the Year for his CD *Jag vil se min älskade komma från det vilda* (I want to see my love come from the wilderness), featuring popular Swedish singer Eva Dahlgren, and in 2005 he won the Society of Swedish Composers Rosenberg Award.

Tryffelhymn (Truffle Hymn) (2002)

for flute, violin, cello and piano

Hillborg's *Truffle Hymn* bears a dedication as rare as the tuber (attached to a fungus) that it commemorates: "to the pigs!" Each year truffle harvesters roam the forests, relying on the super-sensitive nostrils of the female pig to detect the scent of the elusive truffle, nestled at the base of certain tree species. Rooting and rushing, Hillborg's quartet pays homage to this ancient hunt with a porcine *perpetuum mobile*. Perhaps you will hear the squeal of excitement, perhaps the obsessive circling, ever closer to the culinary reward, the momentary chaos of ambition thwarted (in a passage of guided improvisation), a renewed rhythmic focus on the task at hand, until the ground itself gives way when, at the last, the long-sought treasure is unearthed: is it an aroma? a taste? a transfiguration?

YAN MARESZ (B. 1966)

I have always been interested in silhouettes," writes composer Yan Marez, "profiles, contours that stimulate the imagination and often multiply desire ten-fold as a result. What's more, everything that touches on the idea of line or movement has a strong resonance with my work. . . . " Indeed, Marez has succeeded in creating a distinctive musical geometry, not just in the work we will hear tonight, *Entrelacs* (Interlacing), but also in such scores as the "polyphonic" flute solo *Circumambulation* (1996), the orchestral works *Parmi les étoiles fixes* (Among the Fixed Stars, 1991) and *Mosaïques* (1992), and the miniature *Zig-Zag Etudes* (1998).

At an early age, as a student of piano and percussion in Monaco, Marez developed a fascination with jazz that has had a lasting impact on his career. He soon took up the guitar, and in 1983 he met the famous jazz fusion guitarist John McLaughlin, who accepted Marez as his only pupil.

After arriving in the United States, Marez studied at the Berklee College of Music in Boston during the mid-1980s and, as his interest in composition gradually deepened, he enrolled at the Juilliard School in the early 1990s, supported by a grant from the Foundation Princess Grace of Monaco, with subsequent study under David Diamond. At the same time, Marez was serving as McLaughlin's principal arranger.

Marez's roots in jazz have flowered in such piano works as *Cascade for Donna Lee* (1996), which takes Charlie Parker's "Donna Lee" as a point of departure, and *Volubile* (2001, written for Jay Gottlieb), where the composer emulates the pianistic approach of Art Tatum and Cuban jazzman Gonzalo Rubalcaba. In ensemble works as well, Marez makes reference to jazz practices; for example, the soloist in *Eclipse* (1999, for clarinet and ensemble) unfolds a melodic line that, according to the composer, "approaches that feeling of spontaneity and enormous liberty granted to the improvising musician. . . ." Yet jazz is only one facet of Marez's background, for he also studied at IRCAM from 1993-95 and has maintained strong ties to the prestigious institution ever since. During his first visit, he wrote *Metallics* as an exploration and modification (in real time) of sounds drawn from a trumpet soloist, who performs with a tiny micro-recorder on the mouthpiece of the instrument and a thumb-activated trigger. Describing the score for musician and critic Bruno Heuzé and IRCAM's journal *Résonance* in 1998, Marez evokes the idea of "plunging" into the trumpet itself: "the breath travels to the interior of the tube, to the embouchure and its noisy components, the slaps of the lips, the sound of the valves. . . ." Using computer programs to replicate the action of the varied mutes trumpeters use (cup, straight, Harmon, wa-wa, and whisper), Marez creates a form in which the natural trumpet sound becomes "ever noisier." In 2001, the composer returned to this piece and, exercising his considerable gifts as an "arranger," created a version for trumpet and ensemble (without electronics), calling it *Metal Extensions*.

Computer technology has also influenced Marez's conception of musical "space" and "time," as Heuzé suggests, not just by allowing the diffusion of sound through carefully situated speakers or sound sources, but also by encouraging different types of musical "dialogue" and a flexible treatment of narrative time that is more cinematic than literary. These aspects are perhaps most apparent in Marez's multimedia works, including his 2005 score for René Clair's 1923 silent film *Paris qui dort* (performed at the

Auditorium of the Louvre) and the dance productions *Recto-Verso* (2003, for the Ballets de Monte-Carlo) and *Al Segno* (2000, with choreography by François Raffinot and Emmanuelle Vo-Dinh), each of which employs live electronics to capture the corporeal noises and physical gestures of the dancers, transforming them into an array of musical sounds. How does Maresz explain the fact that the sound combinations in these and other works are sometimes eclectic or idiosyncratic? “I am in search of a certain richness more than a revolution,” he suggests, “and therefore I gladly mix . . . spectral concepts, rhythmic ideas born of minimalism or certain melodic ideas that one can find in the spontaneity of jazz; I strive to explore, beyond the clichés of language, profound musical archetypes and the possible connections that unify them or at times even separate them: found objects, gestures and conceptions inherited from every age, rich raw material to reshape into a new and welcoming framework and to use toward expressive ends.”

Maresz’s honors and awards include the Juilliard School’s George Gershwin Prize, a New York Meet the Composer grant, SACEM’s Herve Dugardin prize, and a Rossini Prize from the Academie des Beaux-Arts. In addition to being invited to spend 1995 and 1997 at the Villa Medici in Rome, he has served as composer in residence at the University of the Arts in Berlin, the Conservatory of Strasbourg (in association with the MANCA music festival), and McGill University in Montreal. He has received commissions from IRCAM, the French government, l’Orchestre de Paris, Radio France, Accentus, and Les Percussions de Strasbourg, among others. In November 2001, his music was featured at the European Month of Music in Basel, and in 2005 he participated in the collective project *Microwaves*, completing a score called *Link*, in honor of the late Italian composer Fausto Romitelli. Since 2006, he has taught electronic music at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris and has directed composition courses at IRCAM.

***Entrelacs* (Interlacing) (1997-98)**

for flute, clarinet/bass clarinet, piano, vibraphone, cello and double bass

For Maresz, the idea of “interlacing” is rich in connotations, both antique and modern. He writes: “Beyond the decorative patterns of regular geometric figures, interlacings often appear in ancient art, the undulating and overlapping of waves, or the vibrations of air. More recently, they [have

been used to] schematize the connections and complex interactions of a level of reality inaccessible to our senses (communication networks, neurobiology, particle physics). They also evoke a union of independent elements that live together harmoniously.” It is perhaps this last image that best captures his sextet *Entrelacs*, in which the performers’ distinctive gestures merge and separate like the shadows of ballet dancers, or the traces left by figure skaters on the ice. Maresz continues: “In this piece, the line, animated by an internal pulse, is treated like a vector. A dynamic, elastic entity, the line unwinds out of sinuous symmetries, is subjected to twisting and stretching until its breaking point, where it readily lends itself to ephemeral choreographies.”

Guiding Maresz’s progress through *Entrelacs* is a different vision of musical “lines” and what happens when they overlap or intersect: “The line is also the real or imaginary separation between things,” he observes, “it becomes a limit, a frontier.” Crossing the various borderlines of *Entrelacs*, however, shows just how intricately its materials are interlaced. In the composer’s words, “the contrasts and abrupt changes that make up the piece form, at the same time, the way back to the initial path.” *Entrelacs* was commissioned by Ensemble Intercontemporain, and in 2000 it was the basis for a choreography by Jean-Christophe Maillot and the Ballets de Monte-Carlo.

JESPER NORDIN (B. 1971)

Tonight we hear the work that brought the youngest composer on our program, Jesper Nordin, to international attention, *calm like a bomb* (2000), for violin and tape. Though he writes with an exceptionally broad frame of musical reference, ranging (as he puts it) “from contemporary music through hard rock and folk music to freely improvised music,” it is his imaginative re-creation of folk elements in this and other pieces that has won him the widest renown. Nordin writes: “Since I come from a family of folk musicians from Jämtland in northern Sweden, it feels natural to me use folk music as a base in my works.” This impulse drives such diverse works as *the aisle* (2001, for clarinet and string quartet), *Vintage* (2003, for percussion and electronics), the Double Concerto for

violin, cello and orchestra (2003), the orchestral score *Arv, Cri du berger* (2004, for cello and live electronics), and the choral work *Invisible Mantra* (2005), each of which opens out onto vistas far removed from Scandinavia and its landscapes.

In addition to the in-house training that comes from being part of a musical family, Nordin studied at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm from 1995-2001 and at IRCAM from 2002-03, serving during the intervening year as Composer in Residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada, where he composed his opera *Arnaia — thrown into the sea* on a text by Finnish author Märta Tikkanen. Like his older compatriots, Nordin also counts Brian Ferneyhough among his influences, but his contact with the famous teacher took place in Stanford, not Stockholm. During 2004, he worked at CCRMA [Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics] studio before returning to become Composer in Residence at the Swedish National Radio. In tandem with these experiences, Nordin is an active improviser, lending his talents to Altaír (which draws on a variety of folk, classical, dance, and dramatic traditions), and the trio Trespassing, which aims “to build bridges between improvisation and composition, between an acoustical and electronic sound-world and between contemporary music, traditional Swedish folk music, and more.”

The impact of improvisation surfaces quite directly in works like the marimba solo *Kodoku na Odori* (Solitary Dance, written for Mika Takehara) and *El pajarito con la quijada de burro* (The bird with the donkey’s jaw). In the latter, Nordin samples a recording made by the quartet Altaír (whose name means “bird” in Arabic) and manipulates the excerpts electronically—including sounds made by the jawbone of an ass. Improvisation is also filtered into *Klotho* (2000), which takes its title from one of the Greek goddesses of fate, the weaver; in this case, a multiethnic array of drums forms the loom upon which marimba and cello weave their improvisatory (and in part improvised) lines over a trance-inducing drone. And in the award-winning, wordless *Invisible Mantra*, the idea of improvisation is brought into contact with two of Nordin’s other preoccupations: meditation and the folk music of Jämtland.

Folk music comes to the fore in the Double Concerto, both in its prominent drones and in its use of quarter-tones which, Nordin observes, “have been common in nearly all folk music throughout the world.” A similar

emphasis on borders and border crossing can be heard in *Arv* (Heritage), commissioned for Trondheim Symphony Orchestra in commemoration of the early twentieth-century division of a united Norway/Sweden into the two independent nations we recognize today—a political realignment notable for its peaceful completion. At the outset, Nordin aimed in *Arv* to celebrate the folk traditions shared by his native Jämtland and neighboring Norway. Gradually, however, the title’s literal meaning gave way to a more figurative one, in a process that seems a fitting metaphor for the composer’s varied departures from folk music. The composer recalls: “It’s unusual for me to have a title before I begin composing and therefore the title influenced the work as it took shape. But perhaps I should instead say that the work influenced the title: as the music wandered off on a path of its own, away from its folk music roots toward new areas, I was forced to broaden the meaning of the term ‘heritage’ for myself. The more general Norwegian-Swedish connections still apply but then I felt how the music began to develop in harmony with my own heritage—from personal tragedies and experiences to musical insights and thoughts.”

Nordin has won prizes named for Ton Bruynél (Holland), Luigi Russolo (Italy), Salvatore Martirano (USA), and Pierre Schaeffer (France), and in 2005 his Double Concerto was recommended by the UNESCO Composers’ Rostrum. In 2004, his saxophone concerto *sleep now in the fire* was programmed at the Ultima Festival in Norway and the ISCM World Music Days in Switzerland, and this year *Invisible Mantra* appeared at Prague Premieres and the ISCM World Music Days in Hong Kong. Among his recent works are *Undercurrents*, a commission from the French Ministry of Culture (for cello solo, ensemble, and live electronics); *Residues* (for symphony orchestra and instruments built by Canadian builder Jean-François Laporte); and an electronic score for the new Parisian cultural center “104.” He is currently working on a recorder concerto and a commission for the French ensemble Itineraire.

calm like a bomb (2000)

for violin and pre-recorded sound

The composer writes, “*calm like a bomb* was a definite turning-point in my composing. . . . I made several choices in this composition which have remained with me through several other works, particularly concerning the use of traditional Swedish folk music and electronics, which have since

become increasingly important to me. This influence has not just been restricted to the use of electronic sounds—it has affected all my composing so that when I write a work for symphony orchestra I write in the same way that I would write a work for electronics. I have always tried to use my ears rather than pen and paper when I compose, and therefore a natural choice of method for me is to start by recording sounds and building up sound sketches. My personal connection with the folk music material has never been as obvious to me as it is in this work, which is based on a lullaby that my father, Batte Sahlin, wrote for me when I was a child. I asked the violinist Daniel Möller, the folk and rock musician Fredrik Lindqvist and the folk singer Sofia Karlsson to improvise on this melody and thus I obtained the material that forms the base of the work. The title, as on many other occasions, comes from the rock group Rage Against the Machine. The title captures much of the mood of the work, and the link with the group’s emotionally charged music and its purely physical tension felt natural.”

TOMMY ZWEDBERG (B. 1946)

Though the oldest of the Swedes on the program, Tommy Zwedberg remains perhaps less well known in the United States than he deserves to be as a pioneer in electro-acoustic music. He got his musical training as a trumpet player and some of his earliest ensemble experience came as a volunteer for the military band in the medieval town of Visby. As experimental poet and composer Sten Hanson points out in his essay for Zwedberg’s CD *A Site for a Listener’s Ear*, “In many of Sweden’s small towns the regimental band played a part which far exceeded its purely military role; the members were the only professional musicians in the district. . . they formed the nucleus of the local amateur orchestras, they played in chamber music groups, dance bands and jazz bands.” Though Zwedberg has now moved far beyond his small town roots, he seems to have retained both an openness to the widest variety of musical experience and a commitment to making the most of purposefully limited materials.

Having completed his training to be a trumpet teacher in 1974, Zwedberg

happened upon the electronic music studio at Stockholm’s College of Music, and he quickly changed course, studying composition with Gunnar Bucht for the next two years. Not surprisingly, trumpet sounds helped bring Zwedberg to national attention, by way of the 1977 score *Face the Music*, for trumpet and tape. Lighthearted and virtuosic, it reveals an imagination and, indeed, a sense of humor that have continued to be part of Zwedberg’s oeuvre. For example, in *Gir* (1993) a guitar soloist arrives on stage pulling behind him a plastic tugboat that will emit a toy foghorn sound each time it is stepped upon. The accompanying tape part revels in a play of “foghorns,” transforming every aspect of its distinctively messy attack and decay to create a texture that is evocative, engaging, and strangely contrapuntal. Just one year later, Zwedberg was “at sea” once more, this time in a tape piece called *Genom Vatten* (Through Water), which recreates and elaborates on the sounds of a Swedish cruise ship—to be precise, the M/S [motor ship] Birka Princess, a symbol of the Birka Line’s shift from cargo shipping to luxury tours, and the site of *Genom Vatten*’s world premiere! From a sonic landscape of surf and splash emerge the distorted voices of passengers, the announcements of a PA system, the ambient noise of machinery and dishware, and fragments of distant music, ranging from disco to something more like a fractured operetta.

As *Gir* and *Genom Vatten* suggest, the manipulation of diverse sound sources is key to Zwedberg’s most famous works—humorous and serious, acoustic and electronic, old and new. His first internationally recognized piece was *Hanging* (1979) which takes as its inspiration a twenty-second “sample” of sounds from the Scandinavian bowed harp, or *stråkeharpa*. On its own, the harp’s strings produce an impressive array of overtones, but in Zwedberg’s hands (with the help of electronics) these ethereal sounds evolve into what Hanson calls a “dominating, mysteriously shimmering timbre . . . [with] a strangely mystical character.” Despite the absence of electronics in performance, the composer’s piano score *Dimor* (1984) was created with the help of a computer algorithm that transformed a 55-note rhythm into a kinetic fantasy of mutation and permutation. The same aesthetic principle—of unity through diverse variation—animates Zwedberg’s *And it killed him twice* (1991-92), which the composer himself describes: “The components are made up of fragmented gestures of recorder sounds which are patched together, reassembled—zooming in and out, keeping the components well apart and then uniting them in the

close-knit relationship where they actually belong. The process of coming closer, the relationship to a greater whole, the visibility and invisibility of the building blocks, emptiness and interchangeability—that is what this work is all about.”

Zwedberg’s *Hanging* was honored at the First International Rostrum for Electroacoustic Music, organized by the International Music Council of UNESCO and at the International Conference for Electroacoustic Music at Bourges in 1984. He has also won Sweden’s prestigious Kurt Atterberg Prize in 1999 and has earned special renown for his collaborative work with choreographer Efva Lilja. In addition to participating in the Groupe de Recherches Musicales de l’INA in Paris in the 1970s, and later doing research at Toronto University, he participated in the 1992 meeting of the Japan Music and Computer Science Society and was invited to Bourges as guest composer in 1994. Today, Zwedberg is active in the Swedish contemporary music society Fylkingen, of which he was Chairman from 1983-86. He is also a member of the board of the Swedish Association of Composers, a deputy board member of the Swedish Performing Rights Society, and a leading figure in the Swedish Music Information Centre.

Enso (1993)

for flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trombone, marimba, and piano

Without recourse to electronics, Zwedberg’s *Enso* offers no modified tug-boat sounds, no clinking wineglasses, and no ghostly string overtones. Nonetheless, the brightly colored sextet for winds, percussion, and piano plays the same game of gradually emerging and submerging ideas that characterizes his other scores. It is difficult to pinpoint, for example, the precise moment at which the ensemble’s momentum begins to build. How does the saxophone become such a dominant presence? When do the players begin to function as a unified entity? How, after a relatively sudden trailing off into silence, does the group again coalesce into what might be a walking bass line, if it were not utterly scattering among the instruments?

Despite the difficulty of answering such questions, the textures of Zwedberg’s *Enso* are entirely without vagueness. Bright tone colors, straight-ahead articulations, and Stravinskian accent patterns abound. Conceived in conjunction with a Piano Concerto, the piece reveals these

origins in the distinctive, sweeping piano chord that opens the piece and sounds (veiled or obvious) almost obsessively throughout its first section and again as the work reaches its playful close.

LIZA LIM (B. 1966)

In a 2001 lecture at the Sydney Opera House, Liza Lim commented that “as an Australian composer with a South-east Asian Chinese background, you could perhaps say that I straddle the East-West boundary of Australian musical identity politics in quite a different way. . . I am aware that the ‘hyphenated identity,’ Asian-Australian, positions me quite differently in relation to acts of cultural borrowing. The relationships between notions of where I am and where I look towards are, I think, less stable, more contingent, more ambivalent.” Perhaps paradoxically, in Lim’s case this “ambivalence” yields compositions of striking power and certainty, grounded in the physicality of musical performance and the conviction that music is uniquely able to cross cultural boundaries.

Lim’s education was Australian; she earned degrees from the Universities of Melbourne and Queensland. Yet her career is an international one. Her teachers include Richard Hames, Riccardo Formosa, and Ton de Leeuw, and among her recent works is the large-scale orchestral piece *Ecstatic Architecture*, commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic for their inaugural season in Walt Disney Concert Hall, designed by Frank Gehry. Taking inspiration from Gehry’s innovative “rhythmic curves,” Lim’s own work involves “curling, interweaving shapes” and an interplay between instruments and their surroundings that can be surprisingly literal in its conception. She envisioned “a moment of recognition” between the wood of each cello and the “wooden paneling of the ceiling,” a kinship between the metal of flutes and trumpets and the building’s exterior. A “roar of ear-splitting multiphonics” exalts the auditorium’s capacity to let sound “fill every crevice of the hall and enter the bodies of the listeners.”

Although uniquely tied to the setting of its 2004 premiere, many features of *Ecstatic Architecture* reflect long-standing preoccupations for Lim, espe-

cially in its imaginative treatment of the instrumental ensemble. Her 1993 piece *Koto*, for example, is a landmark work for its gestural or “calligraphic” quality and its treatment of the eight performers as “a single instrument . . . as if they were the incredibly complex, subtle resonances of a gigantic gong.” *Koto* was created through an intense collaboration with Australia’s contemporary music ensemble ELISION that began in 1986 and continues to this day. A collaborative approach also characterizes Lim’s multimedia projects, which reached a culmination during the mid-1990s in a series of site-specific installations created with visual artist Domenico de Clario and extensive work with video artist Judith Wright that led to *Sonorous Bodies* (1999), which was created for the Queensland Art Gallery’s Asia Pacific Triennial and has since traveled around the world.

Lim acknowledges influences that reach far beyond her Chinese-Australian upbringing. One of her first major works, *Garden of Earthly Desire* (1988–89) took its inspiration from the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch; her duo for cello and clarinet *Inguṛ* (Fertility) draws on the modal theory and musical structures of India; other works have incorporated the writings of the Greek poetess Sappho, the novelist Italo Calvino, and the Persian mystical poet Rumi. Nonetheless, in the late 1990s she was particularly attracted to Chinese themes out of an awareness of her dual perspective as a cultural “insider” living “outside” the Chinese mainland. In *Moon Spirit Feasting*, she evoked the world of street opera that combines ancient Chinese theater with “Malaysian Chinese vaudeville, Bangkok strip shows, Hong Kong martial arts movies, and street-side trance rituals”; and in 2001, she contributed music to accompany a French exhibit of Chinese archaeological treasures; the resulting *Machine for Contacting the Dead*, for twenty-seven solo instruments, asked members of the Ensemble Intercontemporain to form a constellation of “meta-instruments,” with one group characterized by the resonances of a Chinese gong, another employing the delicate performance effects typical for the *ch’in* or Chinese zither, and so forth.

More recently, Lim has explored aspects of Australian Aboriginal culture and aesthetics stemming from journeys she made to Aboriginal communities during 2004 while curating a “sunset concert series” for the Adelaide Festival. *Shimmer Songs* (premiered tonight), *Songs found in dream* (premiered at the Salzburg Festival in 2005), *Glass House Mountains*, an installation work made with artist Judy Watson (2005) and *The Compass* (2006), a work

for large orchestra with didgeridoo and flute soloists represent this new emphasis in her oeuvre.

Lim has received commissions from the Arditti String Quartet, Ensemble Modern, Synergy Percussion, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the BBC and ABC Orchestras, among others. Radio Bremen and Westdeutscher Rundfunk have devoted concerts entirely to her music, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players programmed her *Heart’s Ear* in 2005. She has served as guest lecturer at the Darmstadt Summer Music Courses and Cornell University, has participated in the U. C. San Diego SEARCH symposium, and is honorary Adjunct Professor at the School of Music, University of Queensland. *Moon Spirit Feasting*, which was premiered at the 2000 Adelaide Festival, has received five seasons of repeat performances at the Melbourne Festival, Berlin’s Hebbel Theater, Zurich Theater Spektakel, the Saitama Arts Center in Japan, and the 2006 Brisbane Festival. She won a major Australian composition prize, the Paul Lowin Award, for *Ecstatic Architecture*, and the 2005 Festival d’Automne in Paris featured three of her recent pieces: *In the Shadow’s Light*, *The Quickening*, and *Mother Tongue*, a major work for soprano and ensemble commissioned jointly by the Ensemble Intercontemporain and ELISION. Lim was Composer-in-Residence with the Sydney Symphony in 2005–06, where she produced three works: *Immer Fließender*, *Flying Banner* (after Wang To), and *The Compass* (a joint commission with the Bayerischer Rundfunk Orchestra). She was also commissioned by the Lucerne Festival to write a piece for twelve percussionists, *City of Falling Angels*, which was performed this September in Lucerne and Essen. Lim is currently living in Berlin as a guest of the DAAD Artist-in-Residence program and has just completed her third opera, *The Navigator*. The opera, with libretto by Patricia Sykes, will receive its first season of performances at a number of Australian festivals during 2008.

***Shimmer Songs* (2006)**

for harp, three percussionists, and string quartet

The composer writes: “The aesthetic world of *Shimmer Songs* references aspects of Australian Aboriginal culture, notably the idea of ‘shimmer’ as indicator of another spiritual reality, which is key to so much Aboriginal visual arts and culture. Iridescence, optical effects and bright hues are valued for their suggestion of power and at the same time often ritually

obscured , veiled or made dull in order to protect onlookers from those same forces. In Kukatju, one of the desert languages, there is a word, 'kalyururu' that means 'like water shimmering as it falls,' which is used to describe the quality of 'songs found in a dream.'

“I have worked with different kinds of obviously shimmering textures but also with a range of distorted, rattling and scraping sounds that are like incisions, scarrings and veiling effects on top of or within the shimmer. The work does not quote from Aboriginal music at all, but rather is my own personal exploration of one of the important 'pattern languages' that underlies Australian indigenous culture.”

Shimmer Songs was commissioned for the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players by the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University.

Violinist Graeme Jennings is known for his expert performances of contemporary music, which have won him accolades from major figures in contemporary music, including Luciano Berio, Elliott Carter, Wolfgang Rihm, Michael Tippett, and Witold Lutosawski, who called him an “inspired performer” after Jennings's 1987 performance of that composer's *Partita* (originally written for Anne Sophie-Mutter). For eleven years (1994-2005), Jennings was a member of the world renowned Arditti Quartet, touring internationally, giving over 300 premieres, recording more than seventy CDs, and winning both the 1999 Siemens Prize and two Gramophone Awards. Born in Australia, Jennings studied at the Queensland Conservatorium before earning degrees at the San Francisco Conservatory in 1992 and 1994; his principal teachers were Isadore Tinkleman, Mark Sokol, Anthony Doheny and John Curro. He made his solo debut with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra in a performance of Prokofiev's first Violin Concerto, and he has since appeared with orchestras in Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia. As a recitalist, Jennings has a wide repertoire ranging from Bach to Boulez and beyond. This is his first season as a member of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

—Beth E. Levy

Music Director

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 2002.

The Ensemble

The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, an ensemble of highly skilled musicians, performs innovative new music of exceptional interest. It attracts and engages audiences through concert events in the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond, and nourishes the creation and dissemination of new work through commissioning, recording, and outreach.

The **San Francisco Contemporary Music Players (SFCMP)**, now in its 37th 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. A ten-time winner of the prestigious national ASCAP/Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players has won this award more times than any other ensemble. It has commissioned 68 pieces and performed over 1,000 new works, including 57 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 ten albums of its own and contributed to nine others. Its musical outreach programs include presentations in public high schools and its new *Contemporary Insights* series of intimate performances with conversation.

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., 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*.

Carrie Blanding, Director of Operations and Marketing, graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a B.A. in Comparative Literature. For the last six years, she has co-owned and served as Administrative Director for Next Big Thing Children's Theatre, a performing arts summer camp in Danville, California. She has worked for the Mountain Play Association and for San Francisco Performances, and sings as a volunteer member of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. Ms. Blanding is new to the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players' staff this season.

Kate McLoughlin, Production Associate, earned her M.M. in Orchestral conducting at McGill University in Montréal, Canada, where she also completed undergraduate work in bassoon performance and music theory. She is currently the assistant conductor of the Oakland Civic Orchestra, and manager of the Berkeley Youth Orchestra. She joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players' staff in 2006.

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 forthcoming album of compositions by Edmund Campion, and the ensemble's Pablo Ortiz album. 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.

Gregory T. Kuhn (Sound Engineer) is a multi-disciplinary and multi-media artist who freelances in the performing and fine arts as sound engineer, designer, composer, installation designer, collaborator, and fine arts photographer. His work is experienced by audiences around the world, often in contemporary music contexts, multimedia performances, and new and experimental media exhibitions in galleries and museums. Recent and upcoming projects in the performing arts include the New York premiere sound design for Rinde Eckert's *Horizon*, a new multimedia performance work by Joan Jeanrenaud, *Aria*, and a new multimedia/performance work with Randall Packer and tenor Charles Lane, *A Season In Hell* - a culminating performance of an eight year project by the US Department of Art and Technology. His most recent collaborative art installation, *Narcissus' Well* premiered last September at Midwestern State University in Texas. He has just released a CD recording of his 2005 collaboration with the master didjeridoo player, Stephen Kent. Originally from Philadelphia, he lives in Oakland (gtjk@earthlink.net).

Les Stuck began his career as a sound engineer, working for the Kronos Quartet, the Dead Kennedys, Laurie Anderson, and Pharoah Sanders. William Forsythe's Frankfurt Ballet brought him to Germany as a sound designer and musical collaborator, where he also mixed live sound and coordinated electro-acoustics for Frankfurt's Ensemble Modern, working closely with Peter Eötvös, Heiner Goebbels, and Frank Zappa. He then moved to Paris to work at IRCAM, where he was the musical assistant for Pierre Boulez, Tristain Murail, and Philippe Manoury. He is currently a content consultant for Cycling '74 and Technical Director of the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College.

For online reviews of the
San Francisco Contemporary Music Players'
concerts and other music events around the Bay Area, visit
www.sfcv.org.

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