

San Francisco Contemporary Music Players

David Milnes, Music Director

**Furious Craft**

Monday, 8 December 2008, 8 pm  
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum

**Performers:**

Tod Brody, alto flute  
Peter Josheff, clarinet  
David Tanenbaum, guitar  
Ann Yi, piano  
Christopher Froh, percussion (Boulez)  
Daniel Kennedy, percussion (Boulez)  
Loren Mach, percussion (Boulez, Francesconi)  
Graeme Jennings, violin and viola  
Leighton Fong, cello

**Kaija Saariaho, *Sept Papillons* (2000)**

(Approximate duration: 12 minutes)

Leighton Fong, cello

**Zhou Long, *Wild Grass* (1993)**

(Approximate duration: 8 minutes)

Stephen Harrison, cello

**Luca Francesconi, *A fuoco* (1995)**

U. S. premiere

(Approximate duration: 15 minutes)

David Tanenbaum, guitar

↻ *Intermission* ↻

**Pierre Boulez, *Le Marteau sans maître* (1955)**

(Approximate duration: 35 minutes)

Janna Baty, mezzo-soprano

1. avant "L'Artisanat furieux"
2. commentaire I de "Bourreaux de solitude"
3. "L'Artisanat furieux"
4. commentaire II de "Bourreaux de solitude"
5. "Bel édifice et les pressentiments," version première
6. "Bourreaux de solitude"
7. après "L'Artisanat furieux"
8. commentaire III de "Bourreaux de solitude"
9. "Bel édifice et les pressentiments," double

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*Tonight's performance of "Le marteau sans maître" is underwritten by a generous gift from Russ Irwin with additional underwriting from John E. Beebe, 3d, Richard and Patricia Taylor Lee, Charlotte Mennillo, and an anonymous donor.*

*Luca Francesconi's "A fuoco" is made possible in part by the generous support of the Istituto Italiano di Cultura.*

## Program Notes

### *Kaija Saariaho* [b. 1952]

According to Finnish music expert Juhani Nuorvala, the music of Kaija Saariaho is far easier to describe than to analyze: “Analysis is difficult because the conventional analytical tools were developed for another kind of music, a music with distinct beginnings, endings, words, phrases, cadences and frequent contrasts; a music the main ingredients of which are melodic and rhythmic, and thus thematic. In her most important compositions thus far, Kaija Saariaho has avoided gesture and musical object, focusing instead on timbre [tone color] and harmony, and the areas between these.”

Saariaho’s exploration of the relationships between tone color and harmony are directly related to the experiments of the French “spectral” school, embodied by Murail and Grisey. She studied with Paavo Heininen in her native Finland and with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber in Germany, but she chose to settle in Paris in 1982, shortly after attending her first course at IRCAM (the Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique, founded by Pierre Boulez in 1977 and funded by the French government). From the early stages of her career, computer technology was instrumental to her creative work, facilitating extremely slow changes in a given musical parameter. In her computer-generated tape work *Vers le blanc* (“Toward whiteness,” 1982), for example, a three-note chord undergoes one long, incremental transformation into another chord over the space of fifteen minutes. Trained in the visual arts as well as music, Saariaho calls herself a “visual composer,” and Nuorvala notes that “her conception of time and form is sculptural and vertical rather than dramatic and linear.” One of her first internationally recognized works, *Verblendungen* (“Delusions,” 1982-84) for orchestra and tape, takes its shape from the image of a paintbrush stroke: thick at its inception, gradually dissolving into individual “lattices” of sound while the instrumentalists and the tape part negotiate a variable boundary between pitched music and noise.

Saariaho has expressed a fondness for particular timbres—metallic and other percussion, the female voice, the cello, and members of the flute family (especially the alto flute). Yet her favored tone colors are usually just the starting points for imaginative metamorphosis. In *Lichtbogen* (“Arcs of Light,” 1985-86), for chamber ensemble and electronics, harmonies are derived from spectral analyses of the cellist’s “special effects”—ranging from lighter-than-air harmonics to the growling sounds obtained by pressing the bow firmly into the strings. Her 1992 cello concerto, *Amers* (“Landmarks”) requires a unique microphone developed at IRCAM that allows each string to be amplified separately. The same year, Saariaho completed *Noa Noa* (performed by Barbara Chaffé for the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1998), which

takes its title from the diary Paul Gauguin kept during his travels in Tahiti.

Since achieving international prominence in the mid-1980s, Saariaho has composed on commission and in collaboration with some of the world’s best known artists producing such works as *Nymphéa* for string quartet and electronics (1987, commissioned by Lincoln Center for the Kronos Quartet), *Io* (1986-87, commissioned by IRCAM for Ensemble Intercontemporain), the concerto *Graal Théâtre* (“Grail Theater,” written for Gidon Kremer in 1995), and two song cycles for Dawn Upshaw—*Chateau de l’ame* (“Palace of the spirit,” with orchestra) and *Lonh* (with electronics), premiered in 1996 at the Salzburg and Wien Modern Festivals. These vocal scores, as well as her 1999 choral work *Oltra mar*, commissioned for Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic, prepared the way for Saariaho’s first opera, *L’amour de loin* (“Love from a distance”) whose libretto by Amin Maalouf is based on the life of a twelfth-century troubadour. The work premiered in 2000 at the Salzburg Festival (under Peter Sellars and Kent Nagano) and was repeated in France (2001) and at the Santa Fe Opera (2002). Another collaboration between Saariaho and Maalouf, *Adriana Mater*, graced the Santa Fe Opera stage last summer (after receiving its premiere at the Bastille Opéra in April 2006). In this score, lyrical vocal lines tell a story of rape, survival and salvation against an orchestral backdrop that is both rich and mercurial. According to Alan Riding, writing for *The New York Times*, the opera possesses “an emotional scale only occasionally heard in contemporary opera.”

Supported by a salary from the Finnish government, Saariaho has received numerous honors, including Darmstadt’s Krachichsteiner Preis, the Prix Italia, France’s Chevalier à l’ordre des Arts et Lettres, Sweden’s Rolf Schock Prize, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s Elsie Stoeger Prize, an Ars Electronica Prize (Austria), the Nordic Music Prize, and a Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition. A compact disc of her works, *From the Grammar of Dreams*, was named “Record of the Year” in 2000 by the Finnish Broadcasting Company. In addition to their 1998 performance of *Noa Noa*, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players programmed Saariaho’s *Adjo* (1990) during the 1999-2000 season and featured *Six Japanese Gardens* in 2003.

### **Saariaho, *Sept Papillons* (Seven Butterflies) (2000)**

*for solo cello*

Saariaho’s cello solo *Sept Papillons* forms part of the composer’s growing body of works written for the fabulous Finnish cellist Anssi Karttunen. In 2007, he premiered her Cello Concerto: *Notes on Light* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and over the years he has developed a special insight into her creative process. He observes: “*Sept Papillons* was the first piece Saariaho wrote after her opera *L’Amour de loin* (Distant love). It was written during the rehearsal period of the opera in Salzburg. One can sense the desire to find a world

which has nothing to do with the opera—neither in style nor in language. From the metaphors of the opera, which all have an eternal quality—love, yearning, death—she moved to a metaphor of the ephemeral: the butterfly.”

Indeed the seven miniatures explore all manner of rapid movement and fleeting gesture—Karttunen calls them “studies on different aspects of fragile and ephemeral movement that has no beginning and no end.” Some are the butterflies of childhood imaginings, others are the sort whose wings can change the weather a continent away.

### ***Zhou Long* [b. 1953]**

“For every generation,” Zhou Long has observed, “traditional culture is something already formed. What is crucial is how to rediscover and comprehend it more fully. In this process of understanding and discovery, culture will become a living tradition, maintaining its long historical continuity. While this continuity undeniably impacts on the creativity of a given period, artists of one culture or tradition can also choose to absorb and extract the essence of various other cultures in the service of a lasting tradition.” Such respectful and creative fusion has been Zhou’s goal in many of his pieces, including his cello solo *Wild Grass*.

Zhou was born in Beijing to an artistic family, and his career has been shaped by the history and music of his homeland. The turbulent years of China’s Cultural Revolution interrupted his education, and he found himself driving a tractor on a remote government farm rather than continuing his training at the piano. In 1973, he resumed and expanded his musical studies, and four years later, he was selected to attend the reopened Central Conservatory. His studies with Su Xia prepared him to be Composer in Residence for China’s Broadcasting Symphony and helped him win a fellowship that enabled his emigration to the United States in 1985. While earning his doctorate at Columbia University, he worked with ChouWen-Chung, Mario Davidovsky, and George Edwards.

From the beginning of his career, Zhou has combined an interest in new sounds with a commitment to tradition. As his time in New York gave him greater exposure to the Western avant garde, Zhou also deepened his engagement with Asian religion and philosophy. For example, in *Ding* (1990, dedicated to Davidovsky and performed by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1999), a twelve-tone row and a tonal melody are transformed into a reflection on Buddhist meditation practices. In *Tian Ling* (1992, Nature and Spirit), Zhou uses the Chinese lute (pipa) to represent the human spirit and its multifaceted reactions to the natural world. As we will hear tonight, the importance Zhou ascribes to nature springs in part from long-

standing Asian aesthetics. As he puts it, “Today multi-media and technology provide so many possibilities to creative artists. Still, musical inspiration is often born from the beauty of nature.”

Zhou has also drawn upon the instruments and performance techniques characteristic of Chinese folk and classical music. Throughout his oeuvre one finds Chinese instruments used instead of, or together with, members of the Western orchestra; in fact, a few of his scores exist in multiple versions so that they may be performed either with Chinese instruments or without them. In *Song of the Ch’in* (1983) and the later *Poems from Tang* (1995) Zhou treats the modern string quartet like an ancient ch’in (zither), an instrument known for its refined nuances of articulation, microtonal glissandi (slides), and idiomatic ornamentation. Zhou’s sextet *The Ineffable* has East-West symbiosis at its core, uniting violin, cello, flute, and percussion with zheng (zither) and pipa in a piece that focuses on what these diverse instruments have in common, not what sets them apart. *Rites of Chimes* (2000), written for Yo-Yo Ma and the Music from China Project with support from the Smithsonian Institution, shares the goals of “thinking about what we could do to share different cultures in our new society” and “improving the understanding between peoples from various backgrounds.”

Zhou has won prizes from the Chinese National Composition Competition, the International Composition Competition in d’Avray, a CalArts/Alpert Award in the Arts, and the Barlow International Competition, resulting in a performance by the Los Angeles Philharmonic. After working for more than ten years as director of Music from China in New York City, he was honored with an ASCAP Adventurous Programming Award in 1999. He has won commissions from the Kronos, Shanghai, Ciampi and Chester string quartets, the Tokyo Philharmonic, the New Music Consort, the BBC World Service, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, the Peabody Trio, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, Chanticleer, and the Koussevitzky and Fromm Foundations. Zhou has been a guest composer at many festivals, and in 2002 he was composer-in-residence for the Seattle Symphony’s “Silk Road” Festival. In addition to fellowships from the Guggenheim and Rockefeller Foundations and the National Endowment for the Arts, he received the Academy Award in Music (a lifetime achievement award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters) in 2003. Zhou is Visiting Professor of Composition at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, where he directs the Musica Nova ensemble. The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players first played his music in 1995, when they performed *Soul* (1992) for pipa and string quartet, and in 2002 they gave the world premiere of *The Five Elements*. Zhou’s most recent scores include *The Farewell* (for pipa, erhu, and chamber ensemble) and *Cosmic Flames* (for orchestra, Japanese taiko drums, and mixed chorus), commissioned by the Stanford Symphony Orchestra. He is currently working on a flute concerto for the California Pacific and Singapore Symphonies, a chamber work

for the PRISM Saxophone Quartet and Chinese instruments, a commission for the New York New Music Ensemble, and an opera co-commissioned by Opera Boston and the Beijing Music Festival, scheduled for premiere in 2010.

### **Zhou, *Wild Grass* (1993)**

*for solo cello*

In keeping with his love of nature and his philosophical temperament, Zhou composed the cello solo *Wild Grass* after reflecting on the Foreword to a poem of the same name, written by Lu Hsun (1881-1936), whom Zhou calls “the father of contemporary Chinese literature... not only a great writer but also a great thinker and revolutionary.” Few composers could fashion so evocative a sonic tapestry: the cellist recreates the infinite variety of waving, weaving leaves of grass—shaken by wind, crushed by drought and the weight of humanity, yet resilient, even resplendent as each blade takes its place in the cycle of life and death. So intimate is the relationship between the cellist’s gestures and the imagery of Lu Hsun’s poetry that Zhou gives each performer the option of playing the solo independently or together with a recitation of the Foreword to “Wild Grass” as translated by Feng Yu-sheng in 1931.

#### ***Lu Hsun, Foreword to “Wild Grass” (1927)***

*(trans. Feng Yu-sheng, 1931)*

*When I am silent, I feel replete; as I open my mouth to speak, I am conscious of emptiness.*

*The past life has died. I exult over its death, because from this I know that it once existed. The dead life has decayed. I exult over its decay, because from this I know that it has not been empty.*

*From the clay of life abandoned on the ground grow no lofty trees, only wild grass. For that I am to blame.*

*Wild grass strikes no deep roots, has no beautiful flowers and leaves, yet it imbibes dew, water, and the blood and flesh of the dead, although all try to rob it of life. As long as it lives it is trampled upon and mown down, until it dies and decays.*

*But I am not worried; I am glad. I shall laugh aloud and sing.*

*I love my wild grass, but I detest the ground, which decks itself with wild grass.*

*A subterranean fire is spreading, raging, underground. Once the molten lava breaks through the earth’s crust, it will consume all the wild grass and lofty trees, leaving nothing to decay.*

*But I am not worried; I am glad. I shall laugh aloud and sing.*

*Heaven and earth are so serene that I cannot laugh aloud or sing. Even if they were not so serene, I probably could not either. Between light and darkness, life and death, past and future, I dedicate this tussock of wild grass as my pledge to friend and foe, man and beast, those whom I love and those whom I do not love.*

*For my own sake and for the sake of friend and foe, man and beast, those whom I love and those whom I do not love, I hope for the swift death and decay of this wild grass. Otherwise, it means I have not lived, and this would be truly more lamentable than death and decay.*

*Go, then, wild grass, together with my foreword!*

### ***Luca Francesconi* [b. 1956]**

When he visited California in preparation for the premiere of a piece commissioned by Oliver Knussen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, composer Luca Francesconi observed: “It is very important to find clear ideas, after all the complexity of the avant-garde, without giving up the fantastic power of everything in this century that just passed. It is important now, more and more, to use simple elements.” Few would describe Francesconi’s music as simple: on the contrary, it is highly refined in gesture. Musicologist Susanna Pasticci has pointed out that many of Francesconi’s works “follow labyrinthine routes in developing material on multiple levels,” yet his “clearly delineated textures... give the listener unmistakable points of reference.”

Francesconi’s ideas about “simple elements” carry extra weight because the techniques and values of the European avant-garde were part of his training and remain part of his aesthetic. After studying composition from Azio Corghi at the Milan Conservatory, he worked with both Karlheinz Stockhausen and Luciano Berio, and was thus exposed to the most prestigious postwar voices of German and Italian composition. The fact that he studied with Stockhausen in Rome and with Berio at Tanglewood suggests the internationalism that Francesconi has subsequently embraced. His career as composer and conductor has taken him around the world and his music makes its own global journey, incorporating in works like his Suite (1984, for orchestra, jazz quartet and percussion ensemble from Guinea) what Pasticci calls “a polyphony of mixed idioms, ranging from Machaut to Stravinsky, orchestral writing to jazz or Italian folklore to African percussion.” His more abstract ruminations on remembered sounds can be heard in the cycle *Quattro Studi sulla memoria* (Four studies on memory), which includes *Memoria*, *Richiami*



*II*, and *Riti neurali*, as well as the work we will here tonight: *A fuoco*. In fact, Francesconi was the featured composer at the Ultima Festival in Oslo in 2006, which took “Music and Memory” as its theme.

Like many who came under the influence of Stockhausen, Francesconi has sought out or created institutions that foster research in new music technologies. He founded the Agon center for electronic music in Milan, and taught at IRCAM (Paris’s Institute de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musicale) in 1995. He has shown a particular interest in composing for radio, which seems to appeal to his desire for music that is “multimedia” in conception, yet purely sonic in realization. He often speaks of a “theater of the imagination,” and his many operatic works bear out his preoccupation with the dramatic. Chief among these are the video-opera *Striàz* (with images created by Milan’s Studio Azurro) and his more recent *Ballata*, based on Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (2002), with libretto by Umberto Fiori, the Milanese poet and rock songwriter who has furnished texts for a number of Francesconi’s works. In addition to his existing radio operas, he counts among his current projects two multimedia operas intended for co-production with Musica (Strasbourg), Wien Modern, the Helsinki Biennale, Ultima Festival (Norway), and Musica per Roma.

Though many of his works include electronics, the physicality of performance remains at the heart of Francesconi’s oeuvre. Perhaps this can be traced to his experiences as a pianist and conductor, or to his teacher Berio’s tendency to push solo performers into uncharted waters. In 2004, Francesconi completed a concerto for Anssi Karttunen that was inspired by his love of the cello, an instrument that he calls “bellissimo e crudele” (most beautiful and cruel). In *Riti Neurali* (1991), written for violinist Irvine Arditti, the composer pits the soloist’s rhapsodic and sometimes violent lines against a chamber ensemble, and in the more recent *Body Electric*, he augments Arditti’s already considerable powers through the use of an electric violin. While he describes his solo *Respiro* (1987) as “a ‘breathless’ struggle between two instruments: a trombone and a human body,” his later *Animus* (1995-96, realized at IRCAM for Benny Sluchin) complements the trombone with live electronics in a meditation on the dual meanings of its title: spirit and breath.

Francesconi has won many international prizes including awards from Gaudamus (Netherlands), Martin Codax (Spain), and the New Music Composers’ Competition (U. S.), as well as the Guido d’Arezzo Prize (Italy) and Darmstadt’s Kranichsteiner Musikpreis. In 1994 he was awarded the Siemens Prize and the Prix Italia for his *Ballata del rovescio del mondo* (1994), a radio opera with text by Fiori. His works have been commissioned by Ensemble Inter-Contemporain, Ensemble Ictus, Nederlands Blazers, Ensemble l’Itineraire, the ASKO ensemble, the Nieuw Ensemble, Contrechamps, and the London Sinfonietta, among others. In addition to his year at IRCAM, Francesconi

has taught at the Rotterdam and Strasbourg Conservatories and has been a guest composer at the Akiyoshidai Festival in Japan, the Young Nordic Music festival, Madrid’s Centro Reina Sofia, the University of Montreal, and San Francisco State University. His orchestral scores, *Wanderer* and *Cobalt, Scarlet* received a dozen performances all over Europe, and in 2006 the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players featured his ensemble score *Encore/Da Capo* (1985/1995). Francesconi is an active conductor of contemporary music and is currently Professor of composition at Milan Conservatory.

### **Francesconi, *A fuoco* (On fire/In focus) (1995)**

*for solo guitar and flute/bass flute, bass clarinet, percussion, piano, violin and cello*

Francesconi speaks of his chamber ensemble work *A fuoco* as a “study on memory,” suggesting that its varied passages reflect and perhaps require the fluid recombinations and reinterpretations attached to the process of remembering. Each musical moment might be considered an “aural snapshot”—valuable for what it has captured, but also pregnant with the possibilities of everything that lies just beyond the camera’s reach.

The piece apparently grew from a musical spark that Luciano Berio (Francesconi’s teacher at the time) declared to be “not bad at all.” Audible progress through the score, however, resembles a passing parade or a flickering movie screen more than a single, organic unfolding. Throughout this journey, the guitar serves as protagonist. Premiered by guitarist Magnus Andersson with Ensemble Contrechamps (Geneva), *A fuoco* is one of just a handful of pieces to feature the classical guitar in all of its many facets: initiating movement, drawing the instruments together for moments of rest, and plunging headlong into eddies of sound that leave all the players spinning their wheels.

### ***Pierre Boulez* [b. 1925]**

He once proclaimed, “It is not enough to deface the Mona Lisa because that does not kill the Mona Lisa. All the art of the past must be destroyed.” Such incendiary statements (he later claimed this one was merely a quip) are anything but an exception for Pierre Boulez. His scores and writings have made him one of the most enigmatic, controversial, and significant figures in the concert world, while his charisma, poetic sensitivity, and uncanny musical precision have placed him on a par with the greatest conductors of his day.

Born the son of an industrial engineer, Boulez began playing piano at the age of six and became the soprano soloist in a Catholic seminary choir at thirteen. Despite his father’s fierce objections, he finally left for Paris and studies at the Conservatoire in 1942. Enrolling in an advanced harmony course with the

famous composer Olivier Messiaen in 1944, the youth at first excelled, but over time became increasingly disdainful of traditional harmony. “He became angry with the whole world,” Messiaen later recalled. “He thought everything was wrong with music.” After receiving his diploma in 1945, Boulez encountered composer René Leibowitz, who introduced him to Arnold Schoenberg’s twelve-tone music or “dodecaphony.” He threw himself into serial composition with great passion and virtuosity, rejecting old restrictions and inventing new structural principles to suit his needs. Works of this period, including the First Piano Sonata (1946), are meticulously organized in terms of pitch and other elements, but are also highly dramatic, full of dark violence and stark contrast.

In 1952, just a few months after Schoenberg’s death, Boulez created a scandalous sensation by publishing an article in the English music journal *Score* with the shocking title, “SCHOENBERG IS DEAD.” Here, he attacked the late composer for having set in motion the serialist revolution, only to then hinder it with “a warped romantico-classicism” that relied too heavily on formal structures borrowed from older traditions. He urged composers to follow in the purer, more “logical” serialist footsteps of Schoenberg’s student, Anton Webern, a statement which quickly elevated Webern from a position of obscurity to that of hero and role model for composers both in Paris and in the new music center of Darmstadt, Germany. In another article titled “Eventually...” Boulez proclaimed, “Any musician who has not felt...the necessity of the dodecaphonic language is *useless*, for everything he writes will fall short of the imperatives of his time.” Boulez followed up these manifestos within the year with *Structures* (1952) for two pianos, a work of near-obsessive control and complexity in which serialist principles lie at the heart of not just pitch, but also rhythm, duration, intensity, and mode of attack.

Technically, *Structures* achieved nearly everything prescribed in his article, but soon Boulez had shifted his attention toward new approaches that were equally complex, but far more intuitive. His first undisputed masterpiece from this time, *Le marteau sans maître* (The Hammer without a master) was described even by the imperious Igor Stravinsky as “one of the few significant works of the post-war period of exploration.” At the heart of this score, and others to follow, is a tremendous confluence of music and literature, in this case the poetry of René Char. In 1958, he was inspired by the fluid structures of Stéphane Mallarmé’s poetry to create the *Improvisations sur Mallarmé* (1958), which were later re-orchestrated as the second and third movements of the monumental *Pli selon pli* (Fold upon fold, 1961) for soprano and orchestra, and other sources of inspiration include Marcel Proust, Henri Michaux, Kafka, and Beckett.

In his meditation on music and text, Boulez has concerned himself with much more than simple text setting or “accompaniment.” He has drawn deep analogies between literary and musical creation to pose questions about the

linear, moment-by-moment unfolding of musical time. In relation to his Third Piano Sonata (1956-57), he wrote: “Let us reclaim for music the right to parentheses and italics... an idea of discontinuous time thanks to structures which are interwoven instead of remaining partitioned and watertight...” Unusually, the Third Sonata also incorporates aleatory or chance elements (an after-effect of the composer’s complicated contact with John Cage in Darmstadt), but the idea of cyclical or inter-penetrating musical time has continued to find powerful expression in Boulez’s scores. In fact, if one considers computer codes as a family of languages, Boulez has helped to foster hundreds of new musico-linguistic intersections through his work at the Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM) in Paris, a computer music center which he was instrumental in forming and where he served as director from 1978 until 1992.

### ***Le Marteau sans maître* (The Hammer without a Master) (1953-55; revised 1957)**

*for voice, flute, xylophone, vibraphone, percussion, guitar, and viola*

At a concert in Basel in the 1960s, still very early in his career as a conductor, Boulez presented his masterpiece *Le Marteau sans maître* (The hammer without a master) alongside the seminal song cycle *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), written by his one-time nemesis Arnold Schoenberg. On this occasion, he gave a lecture called “To speak, to play, to sing,” that reveals much about *Le marteau*, its place in history and its relationship to the poetry at its core: three texts by French poet René Char, from the 1934 collection that gave Boulez’s work its title. Boulez had already worked with texts by Char in the song cycle *Le Visage nuptial* (The nuptial face) (1946) and in *Le Soleil des eaux* (The sun of waters) (1948), a cantata which evolved out of music intended for the interludes of a radio play by Char. For *Le Marteau* he chose much shorter texts than in these earlier works, precisely because they allowed him greater flexibility in the treatment of time. “If text is too abundant, time becomes so distended that the music no longer has a *raison d’être* in relation to time.... In Char’s poetry, where time is extremely concentrated, the music does not distend this time but can graft itself onto it. Such a poem does not reject music, but, rather, calls out for it.”

Char’s words are deeply and radically interwoven into the nine movements of Boulez’s score. The three poems proliferate into four texted movements and five instrumental ones that serve as prefaces, postludes, or commentaries. Moreover, the movements conceptually attached to a particular poem (e.g. “avant L’Artisanat furieux,” “L’Artisanat furieux,” and “après L’Artisanat furieux” or the “Bourreaux de solitude” and its three commentaries) are not presented in succession but are interspersed through *Le Marteau* to create a musical reflection of what Char liked to call a “verbal archipelago.” In this score, Boulez contends not just with the poetry of the past but also with the influence of Schoenberg’s *Pierrot*. This is most evident in the idiosyncratic

instrumentation: a colorful palette of plucked, struck, and sustained instruments that recalls *Pierrot* and that Boulez sometimes linked to the sounds of Asian music. Like *Pierrot*, *Le Marteau* uses a different combination of performing forces for each of its sections, reserving the fullest complement of players for the final movement. Finally, just as *Pierrot* did for Schoenberg, *Le Marteau* gave Boulez an arena in which to experiment with a new and intuitive creation of musical gestures. “There is in fact a very clear and very strict element of control,” he observed, but “at the local level there is an element of indiscipline—a freedom to choose, to decide and to reject.”

Uncharacteristically, Boulez understates his case—not just in describing the tension between control and freedom in *Le Marteau*, but also in pointing out that a “radical re-thinking of the music-text relationship... is a major force in the formal construction of the piece.” In fact, *Le Marteau* enacts its own meditation on the requirements of poetry and the transformation of the poetic voice. The third movement, “L’Artisanat furieux,” represents the most “linear” setting of Char’s text. In the first of the “Bel edifice” movements, the role of the voice is “contested by the instrumental context.” In “Bourreaux de solitude” the voice “emerges periodically from the ensemble to enunciate the text,” and finally, in the second “Bel edifice” we hear what Boulez describes as “a final metamorphosis of the role of the voice: once the last words have been pronounced, the voice—now humming—merges into the instrumental ensemble, giving up its own particular endowment, the capacity to articulate words.” In the end, as many critics have pointed out, the flute *becomes* the lyrical voice, embodying the poetry that the soprano could only utter.

—Program Notes by Beth E. Levy



Please join us for a reception after the concert. Scores from tonight’s program are also on display there.

### **Le Marteau sans maître**

*Poems by René Char*

#### **L’Artisanat furieux**

La roulotte rouge au bord du clou  
Et cadavre dans le panier  
Et chevaux de labours dans le fer à cheval  
Je rêve la tête sur la pointe de mon couteau le Pérou.

#### **Bel édifice et les pressentiments**

J’écoute marcher dans mes jambes  
La mer morte vagues par-dessus tête

Enfant la jetée-promenade sauvage  
Homme l’illusion imitée

Des yeux purs dans les bois  
Cherchent en pleurant la tête habitable.

#### **Bourreaux de solitude**

Le pas s’est éloigné le marcheur s’est tu

Sur le cadran de l’Imitation  
Le Balancier lance sa charge de granit  
réflexe.

### **The Hammer without a Master**

*Translation based on that of Paul Griffiths*

#### **Furious Handicraft**

*The red caravan beside the iron nail  
And corpse in the basket  
And carthorses in the horseshoe  
I dream the head on the point of my knife,  
a Peru.*

#### **Fine Building and Premonitions**

*I hear walking in my limbs  
The dead sea waves overhead*

*Child the wild pier  
Man the imitated illusion*

*Pure eyes in the woods  
Weeping seek the habitable head.*

#### **Hangmen of Solitude**

*The step has gone away the walker fallen  
silent*

*On the dial of Imitation  
The Pendulum casts its load of granite in  
reverse.*

## *Join the San Francisco Contemporary*

### *Ojai Music Festival*

**The Board of Directors of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players invites you to join a small group at the Ojai Music Festival**

Thursday, June 11 through Sunday, June 14, 2009

#### **We will have excellent seats for seven contemporary music concerts**

Featured artists include the ensembles Eighth Blackbird and Carla Kihlstedt's Tin Hat, pianists Jeremy Denk and Lisa Kaplan, soprano Lucy Shelton, percussionist Matthew Duvall, singer/actor Rinde Eckert, electric guitarist Steven Mackey, and recorder collective QNG.

Featured works include Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, fully staged and costumed; major works of Louis Andriessen and George Crumb; Steve Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians*; and the world premiere of Steven Mackey's *Slide* – a concert-length music/theater piece.

#### **Other Planned activities**

- Festival Symposium led by Ara Guzelimian, Provost and Dean of the Julliard School, featuring discussions with festival artists and others
- Preview talks before each evening concert
- Patron opening reception and after-concert private parties
- Final night gala with all festival artists and personnel

#### **Accommodations and Meals**

- Rooms and breakfasts in a very comfortable and conveniently located hotel
- Welcome Dinner
- Full breakfasts each day
- Symposium lunch
- Farewell Brunch and wrap-up discussion

**Cost:** \$1995 per person includes: festival tickets, festival patron events, hotel room for four nights with full breakfasts, transport to festival and to and from the Santa Barbara airport to meet recommended flights, and a \$500 tax-deductible donation to the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. A single supplement will apply. Airfare not included.

*For further information about this trip, contact the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players at [info@sfcmp.org](mailto:info@sfcmp.org) or 415-278-9566.*

## *Music Players for two exciting trips...*

### *MANCA Festival in Nice, France*

**The Board of Directors invites you to join a small group in attending the ensemble's performance at the MANCA Festival in Nice**

Tuesday, November 10 through Tuesday, November 17, 2009

#### **Planned activities**

Travel to Paris and Nice to explore contemporary music and art before attending the concert of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players at one of the world's most prestigious new music festivals: the MANCA Festival in Nice.

In Paris, stay three nights at a comfortable hotel in the centrally located Marais district, near IRCAM (Institute for music/acoustic research and coordination) at the Centre Pompidou. Tour IRCAM, attend concerts, and visit modern and contemporary art galleries and museums.

Travel from Paris to Nice on the high-speed TGV train.

In Nice, stay four nights in a comfortable hotel in the center of town within walking distance of the Opera House. Attend concerts of the MANCA Festival, including the Sunday, November 15, concert by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. Attend a special reception for our musicians. Explore the art world in Nice and the nearby Riviera, including an excursion to St-Paul-de-Vence.

#### **Accommodations and Meals**

- Rooms and full breakfasts in two very conveniently located hotels
- Five main meals (Lunch or Dinner)
- Special meal with our musicians
- Farewell Brunch and wrap-up discussion

**Cost:** \$3850 per person includes: MANCA Festival tickets, hotel room for seven nights with full breakfasts, additional meals as described above, first class one way rail ticket Paris-Nice with transfers, and a \$500 tax-deductible donation to the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players to help underwrite the MANCA concert. A single supplement will apply. Airfare not included.

*For further information about this trip, contact the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players at [info@sfcmp.org](mailto:info@sfcmp.org) or 415-278-9566.*



## The Performers

**Janna Baty**, soprano and mezzo-soprano, has become a prominent voice in contemporary music, appearing in such works as Thomas Ades's *Powder Her Face* and a new opera by Eric Sawyer, *Our American Cousin*. She has performed under conductors James Levine and Seiji Ozawa and has appeared with the Boston Modern Opera Project, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Daejeon Philharmonic (South Korea), the Hamburg State Opera, L'Orchestre national du Capitole de Toulouse, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition to appearing at the Tanglewood Festival, she has won Chile's "Luis Sigall" prize for music performance and has been praised by *The Boston Globe* for her "rich, viola-like tone" and "rapturous, luminous lyricism." A former faculty member of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Baty joined the faculty of the Yale School of Music this fall.

**Leighton Fong** is a longtime member of the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble and also serves as Principal Cello with the California Symphony. He plays regularly with the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players and the Empyrean Ensemble, and he is an active freelancer in the Bay Area. He has taught at U. C. Berkeley since 1997. Fong studied at the San Francisco Conservatory, the New England Conservatory, the Bern Conservatory in Bern, Switzerland, and the Royal Danish Conservatory in Copenhagen, Denmark. He joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 2006.

**Stephen Harrison** is cellist of the Ives Quartet and Senior Lecturer in Cello and Chamber Music at Stanford University. After undergraduate work at the Oberlin College Conservatory, he received his Masters degree with distinction from Boston University. He was a founding member of the Stanford String Quartet and is former principal cellist of the Chamber Symphony of San Francisco. He is on the summer faculties of the Schlern International Music Festival and the San Diego Chamber Music Workshop. He joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1982.

**David Tanenbaum**, guitar, has been soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Vienna's ORF orchestra, playing under such eminent conductors as Esa-Pekka Salonen, Kent Nagano, and John Adams. Among the many works written for him are Hans Werner Henze's guitar concerto *An Eine Aolscharfe*, Terry Riley's first guitar piece *Ascension*, four works by Aaron Jay Kernis, and the last completed work by Lou Harrison. He has toured extensively with Steve Reich and Musicians, was invited to Japan in 1991 by Toru Takemitsu, and has had a long association with Ensemble Modern. He joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 2008.

## 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 (SFCMP)**, now in its 38th 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 66 U.S. and 136 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 eleven 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.

## Staff

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 has served 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, joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 2007, after six years as co-owner and Administrative Director of Next Big Thing Children's Theatre, a popular performing arts camp for children in the East Bay. She has also worked at the Mountain Play Association and trained through internships at the San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Performances. An avid singer, Ms. Blanding has performed with the San Francisco Symphony Chorus and was a soloist with the UC Jazz Ensembles. She obtained her B.A. degree in Comparative Literature from the University of California at Berkeley, where her work was honored with the department's academic achievement award.

**William Quillen**, Project Developer, is a Ph.D. candidate in musicology at the University of California, Berkeley, writing a dissertation on contemporary Russian music. He earned a master's degree in musicology at UC Berkeley and a bachelor's degree in history and music at Indiana University, Bloomington. During 2007-08, he was a Fulbright scholar at the Moscow Conservatory, where he spent the year working with contemporary Russian composers. He has been the assistant director of the University Chorus at UC Berkeley, an intern with the San Francisco Symphony, and has co-organized symposia and concerts in California and Moscow. He joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in September 2008.

## SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS

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### THE PLAYERS

Tod Brody (2001)*, flute	Julie Steinberg (1989), piano
William Wohlmacher (1995), clarinet	William Winant (1988), percussion
Carey Bell (2004), clarinet	Daniel Kennedy (1993), percussion
Rufus Olivier (1991), bassoon	Christopher Froh (2003), percussion
Lawrence Ragent (1981), French horn	Roy Malan (1976), violin I
Jeff Biancalana (2006), trumpet	Graeme Jennings (2007), violin I
Hall Goff (1979), trombone	Susan Freier (1993), violin II
Peter Wahrhaftig (1989), tuba	Nanci Severance (2008), viola
Karen Gottlieb (1990), harp	Stephen Harrison (1982), cello
David Tanenbaum (2008), guitar	Leighton Fong (2006), cello

*\*Dates indicate year of joining.*

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Adam Frey, <i>Executive Director</i>	Beth E. Levy, <i>Program Note Writer</i>
Carrie Blanding, <i>Director of Operations &amp; Marketing</i>	Daniel Cullen, <i>Rehearsal Facilitator</i>
	Robert Shumaker, <i>Recording Engineer</i>