

San Francisco Contemporary Music Players

Performers:

Tod Brody, flute
Carey Bell, clarinet
David Tanenbaum, guitar
Ann Yi, piano
Daniel Kennedy, percussion
Roy Malan, violin
Nanci Severance, viola
Stephen Harrison, cello
Ken Ueno, voice

Robert Shumaker, *Recording Engineer*
Gregory Kuhn, *Sound Engineer*
John MacCallum, *Assistant Sound Engineer*

Pre-concert talk moderated by William Quillen.



The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players extends its special thanks to U. C. Berkeley's Center for New Music and Audio Technologies (CNMAT) for its generous in-kind support of this production.

The commission of Ken Ueno's Archaeologies of the Future is made possible in part by a grant from the Northern California Composers Commissioning Program, which provides support for composers' careers while helping forge new connections between composers, performers and presenters. This program of the American Composers Forum, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter, is supported by the San Francisco Foundation through its Fund for Artists, and by individual donors.

Tonight's concert is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Wattis Foundation, the Zellerbach Family Foundation.



Made to Order

Monday, 2 November 2009, 8 pm
Herbst Theatre

Sara Jobin, Conductor

Donnacha Dennehy, *As An Nós* (2009)

(Approximate duration: 15 minutes)
World Premiere

Commissioned by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players,
with funding from the Arts Council of Ireland

Ronald Bruce Smith, *Five Pieces for Guitar and Electronics* (2007)

David Tanenbaum, guitar

I. Echoes
II. Lachrymal
III. Brunete
IV. Saudade
V. Stelé
(Approximate duration: 15 minutes)

↻ *Intermission* ↻

Ken Ueno, *Archaeologies of the Future* (2009)

Ken Ueno, voice
(Approximate duration: 18 minutes)
World Premiere

Commissioned by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

Philippe Leroux, *De la texture* (On texture) (2007)

(Approximate duration: 17 minutes)

Commissioned by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

Program Notes

Donnacha Dennehy [b. 1970]

In an interview with Jonathan Grimes of Ireland's Contemporary Music Centre, Donnacha Dennehy explains his fascination with all things urban. "From being a kid and growing up in Dublin I've always had—and still do—a childish delight in cities. I just love cities. I enjoy the countryside too but as a kind of a relaxation. I enjoy the bustle and all the things that people complain about in cities. It's all the weirdness of humankind concentrated in cities, and yet it's also ordinary. That kind of energy has always been strong for me in my music." Amiably communal and sometimes noisy, Dennehy's oeuvre captures the excitement of city life with personality and flair, while also making space for more contemplative works, and for music that grows out of the geography and traditions of his native Ireland, as we will hear in tonight's premiere of *As An Nós*.

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

Based on his experience at Illinois, Dennehy co-founded the Crash Ensemble almost immediately upon his return to Ireland in 1997 in order to foster "music for mixed media, stuff that was quite rhythmic, and with a little bit of an urban edge to it." He recalls: "We weren't afraid to acknowledge the influence of rock because it's a very important part of our growing up now, anyone from my generation." Since the late 1990s,

Dennehy has produced a steady stream of impressive works, fulfilling commissions from the RTE (Irish Public Television) and the BBC, winning performances from the London Sinfonietta and the Percussion Group of the Hague, and collaborating with choreographers Shobana Jeyasingh and Yoshiko Chuma.

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

Dennehy has received commissions from the Percussion Group of the Hague, Ensemble Integrales, Prism, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the Aurelia Saxophone Quartet, the RTE National Symphony Orchestra, and Icebreaker, and his music has appeared at festivals worldwide. In 2004, the Dutch group Electra performed his *The Weathering* (for electric violin, recorder and video) at Lincoln Center and in 2006, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players featured his *Glamour Sleeper*. Among his recent premieres are *Stamp* (2008), written for the Smith Quartet and *Grá Agus Bás*, which Allan Kozinn called "magnificently energetic" when the Crash Ensemble played it in New York; he is currently completing a commission from soprano Dawn Upshaw. Dennehy is currently on the faculty at Trinity College, and in 2005, he was elected to Aosdána, Ireland's state-sponsored academy for the creative arts. More information at www.donnachadennehy.com.

Dennehy, *As An Nós* (2009)

flute/piccolo, clarinet, piano, percussion, guitar, violin, viola, cello

The composer writes, “*Kicking a habit* is loosely translated into Irish (Gaelic) as *eirí as an nós*, but as with many phrases in Irish, its resonance is actually much more complex than that. *Eirí as an nós* literally translated means to rise out of a habit or a tradition or a style. *An nós* itself often has good connotations in the culture, not just bad. In fact one of my favorite styles of Irish singing is known as *sean nós* (the old style). I like the association of habit, tradition and style with gravity, and the release of it with levity. In the middle ages, whole philosophies developed out of the opposition between levity and gravity. In this piece the gravity of the initial material is set in place by repeating notes (like dots in a Seurat painting), that in spite of any larger pitch or dynamic patterns, are constantly arranged in groups that forever decay into silence. The piece is a poetic attempt to maintain and yet escape (maybe even transcend) its own habit.”

As An Nós was commissioned by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, with funding from the Arts Council of Ireland.

Ronald Bruce Smith [b.1961]

Ronald Bruce Smith is well known to Bay Area audiences, both through his Association with the University of California, Berkeley and the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies [CNMAT] and through numerous California performances, including the Berkeley Symphony’s 2000 premiere of *Constellation*, for orchestra and live electronics; a Los Angeles performance of *Remembrances of a Garden* in 1996; the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players’ 2002 rendering of *return to breath* (2000); and several appearances under the auspices of San Francisco’s Other Minds Festival and Séance concerts.

Many of Smith’s works share a contemplative character, a preoccupation with enhancing the resonance of a given ensemble, and an openness to new sound sources (including non-Western ones) that caused the *New York Times* to call his music “fresh and lustrous.” In *Five Meditations* (1997-99), for example, based on research he began at IRCAM and realized more fully at CNMAT, Smith manipulates materials drawn from Pakistani vocal music and the Indonesian gamelan (percussion orches-

tra). His *Kyrie Eleison* (1992) combines a soprano soloist, orchestra and live electronics in what he calls a “quiet plea for mercy as well as a static prayer for spiritual reflection,” intended as a memorial for fourteen students murdered at the University of Montreal in December 1989. The evocative *return to breath* also became a memorial work, after the untimely death of Michael J. Baker, director of Toronto’s ArrayMusic Ensemble.

As we will hear tonight, Smith’s interest in the nuances of tone color has taken diverse forms. In works like *Still/Life* (1993) for flute and piano or *Remembrances of a Garden* (1994), for chamber ensemble, timbral variety comes from dramatic articulations and subtle performance techniques. In his chamber work *Flux*, performed by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1995, he relies on the mathematical exploration of tone color based on the manipulation of harmonic spectra from the overtone series. More imaginative still is the 1995 orchestral score *Echo (Ecco (Eco))* whose threefold title gives a foretaste of the work’s intricacy, playing on the English word echo, the Italian *ecco* (behold), and the author Umberto Eco. In Smith’s words: “The three words of the title when spoken correctly one after the other go through subtle changes in the sounds of their vowels.... This is reflected in the music in that a line or chord may go through several color changes, via its orchestration, while being sustained. The word ‘echo’ is also reflected in the music in that melodic figures are often closely echoed in other instruments to create a large and complex reverberation effect.” Playing as it does with English, Italian, and a French-tinged interest in the sonic phenomena of attack, echo, and decay, the work shows the international scope of Smith’s vision.

Smith has received many awards for his compositions, including the International String Quartet Competition in Washington, D. C. and the Robert Fleming Prize of the Canada Council. He has received commissions funded by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Barlow Endowment for Music, the Manhattan School of Music, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Ontario Arts Council, and performances by such ensembles as the Aitken/Tureski Duo, California E.A.R. Unit, Cikada, the Continuum Ensemble, the Verge Ensemble, the Del Sol String Quartet, Earplay, the Evergreen Club Gamelan, Manhattan School of Music Percussion Ensemble, the Pierrot Ensemble, Columbia Sinfonietta, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra, and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. In 1986, he was co-founder of Toronto’s Continuum Contemporary Music Ensemble, which has won national

awards for its innovative programming and its contribution to Canadian culture. He attended the University of Toronto, McGill University, and U. C. Berkeley, where he worked with Richard Felciano and David Wessel, receiving his doctorate in 1992. He then spent time in Paris at IRCAM [Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique], studying with Tristan Murail, and in his native country, Canada, where he served as resident artist at the Banff Centre School of the Arts and at Ontario's Festival of the Sound. He has since taught at CNMAT, Stanford University, the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, and served as resident composer at the electronic arts institute in Amsterdam, STEIM, in 2006. In 2003, he joined the faculty at Northeastern University. Smith recently completed a commission for the Manhattan School of Music Percussion Ensemble as well as his Third String Quartet, which was commissioned by the Barlow Endowment. Among his current projects is a sextet for the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players commissioned with funding from the Canada Council for the Arts. More information at www.ronaldbruce-smith.com.

Smith, *Five Pieces for Guitar and Live Electronics* (2007)
for guitar and live electronics

In the grand tradition of the suite for solo stringed instrument, Smith has composed a set of five guitar vignettes, some dance-like and others more contemplative. As its full title suggests, however, the *Five Pieces for Guitar and Live Electronics* are far removed from the world of a Bach partita or a Mozart divertimento. Instead, as Smith observes, the composition “is reflective of our current time of conflict.” (In particular, the third movement takes its title from the site of a Spanish Civil War battle.) The commissioning process, too, sets Smith's score apart from an eighteenth-century suite. It was commissioned under a U. C. Discovery Grant from the University of California's Industry-University Cooperative Research Program and Gibson Guitar Corporation, with funding from CNMAT. Smith notes that while “the aim of the commission was to incorporate into a concert piece for solo guitar the guitar-centered software technology that researchers [at CNMAT] had developed,” he eventually “began to develop my own [effects] that would better suit the compositional ideas that were emerging.”

As the performer moves through the different moods of Smith's set (“Echoes,” “Lachrymal,” “Brunete,” “Saudade,” and “Stelé”), he also triggers, using a foot pedal, different electronic modules that modify

and playback his own sounds, occasionally adding percussive emphasis but more often creating effects of great delicacy. The composer writes, “Three of the five pieces are each based on a different musical style associated with the classical, or nylon string, guitar. The first movement references aspects of the baroque toccata and uses cross-string, or “campana”, technique to play scalar material. It is a technique that was common to lute playing in the renaissance and baroque periods; the third movement recalls aspects of flamenco music while the fourth piece is reminiscent of Brazilian samba and bossa nova soloists like Baden Powell. The second piece is a mix of arabesques in a somewhat middle-eastern style that also employs a contrasting homophonic B section. The fifth piece alludes to East Asia through the use of gongs and cross string techniques that are idiomatic to the Javanese *kacapi* (a zither).”

While the digital components show the flexibility of Smith's imagination, the guitar part is designed for supple hands and expert musicianship. In Smith's words, “Much of the music in this composition requires a high level of guitar virtuosity. It was written with the outstanding technique and musicianship of David Tanenbaum in mind.” Tanenbaum gave the premiere at the 2007 Festival of New American Music in Sacramento and has since performed it at the Boston Guitar Festival in 2008.

Ken Ueno [b. 1970]

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

Ueno was born in New York, but thanks to his father's job with a Japanese airline, he spent parts of his childhood in Japan and Switzerland,

before attending high school in California. He enrolled in the officer training program at West Point until an injury sidelined this phase of his career and pushed him to embrace his long standing love for music. Playing guitar in rock bands quickly evolved into songwriting, which took him to the Berklee College of Music; subsequent education at Boston University, Yale University and Harvard University brought him into contact with such teachers as Lukas Foss, Martin Bresnick, Bun-Ching Lam, Ned Rorem, Evan Ziporyn, Mario Davidovsky, and Bernard Rands. Subsequent work with Frederic Rzewski at the Conservatory Royal de Liège and at the annual Composition Course at IRCAM are perhaps more indicative of defining traits in his oeuvre: an emphasis on the social meanings of musical performance and an embrace of musical technology.

A glance at the composer's catalog will reveal a number of surprising sound sources, ranging from soda cans and boomboxes to Big Bird toys and digital radio alarm clocks. Even his more conventional ensembles often involve extended performance techniques or electronic enhancement. For Ueno, amplification is not about loudness. Nor is it solely about a connection to the world of rock music. Instead, Ueno writes: "What's cool is that amplification works to make more apparent the inherent qualities in the physicality of sound." In *Age of Aircraft* (2002), for example, an amplified and distorted cello part is meant to blend seamlessly with electronic sounds; in *whatWALL* (2003) "a gradual build-up of electronic sounds (initially sounding like resonance but later transforming into a more independent layer of sound)... eventually surrounds the audience in quadraphonic space (a sonic 'wall' around the audience)."

While Ueno's works are formed of interesting sounds, they employ equally interesting ways of structuring musical form. Written in honor of the late Toru Takemitsu (the most famous composer to unite Japanese and Western influences), Ueno's *Kaze-no-Oka* (Hill of the Winds) involves an extractable cadenza for *biwa* (lute) and *shakuhachi* (end-blown flute). Other works draw formal principles from literary models (particularly the works of Samuel Beckett), from alphabetic codes (including both phonetic and ideographic systems), and even from ergonomics (in which musical decisions take into account the approximate comfort or discomfort level of the intended performer). In the end, Ueno's idiosyncratic mixture of resources can best be summed up in his own words for the *Boston Globe*: "I think the attempts to politicize the differences

between types or classes of music are less relevant for my generation than they ever were.... There's a level of commonality between Metallica and Bartók—some grammatical differences, sure, but at the visceral level they're the same. I mean, when I play Xenakis to my friends in LA who are in heavy metal bands—they *get* it. It's just gritty fantastic music."

In addition to winning the prestigious Rome Prize in 2006, Ueno has received awards from the Aaron Copland House, Fromm Music Foundation, and Fondazione Russolo-Pratella. His music has been performed by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, eighth blackbird, the Prism Quartet, and the American Composers Orchestra, and his *Shiroi Ishi* (White Stone) (2001), written for the Hilliard Ensemble, remains in their repertory as they tour worldwide. In 2006, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players performed his sextet *...blood blossoms...*, which premiered at the Bang on a Can Festival in 2002. Ueno has served as co-director of the Minimum Security Composers Collective, which he helped to found in 1998, and as the host of the Cambridge public access television program *The Modern Music Show with DJ Moderne*. Among his recent works are a multimedia theater piece for violist Kim Kashkashian and percussionist Robyn Schulkowsky and in April 2008, he was the featured soloist in the Boston Modern Orchestra Project's premiere of his Concerto for overtone singer and orchestra, using skills that we will hear in tonight's world premiere of *Archaeologies of the Future*. More information is available at www.kenueno.com.

Ueno, *Archaeologies of the Future* (2009)

for amplified bass flute, piano, percussion, viola, cello, and vocalist

Ueno writes, "This project was initiated by David Milnes, to whom it is dedicated.

"The composing of *Archaeologies of the Future* follows *On a Sufficient Condition for the Existence of Most Specific Hypothesis*, my vocal concerto with orchestra, as my second attempt to reconcile the multiplicity of being a "classical" composer and an experimental vocalist. The title is borrowed from a book by Frederic Jameson.

"In a manner akin to the way some contemporary visual artists make site-specific works, many of my works derive their structural aspects from considerations of the special instrumental skills of the performers with whom I have collaborated, in a manner I term "person-specific."

Archaeologies is person-specific to myself. As a vocalist, I specialize in techniques like overtone singing (straight bi-tonal style), throat singing (a style with laryngeal straining), multiphonics, circular breathing, sub-tones and extreme high registers. One of my ongoing projects is a quest for melody that is instrument (or voice) specific, yet acknowledges the recent history of abstraction. The paintings of Gerhard Richter and Anselm Kiefer have been inspirations in this regard. I see their work as reclaiming representation in a way that is aware of the recent history of abstraction.

“*Archaeologies* also represents a Borgesian fantasy. Borges is a master of writing short stories that imply larger structures. He contemplates infinity and the eternal, the complexities of time perceived. I imagined *Archaeologies* from an equally different vantage point from where we are, presently, in time.

“In listening to certain ancient musics like *Gagaku*, I feel a wisdom that is quite hard to locate in time. The music sounds strangely ancient at the same time as I could imagine it as some kind of weird music from the future. I imagine a sacred music of the future. Some culture in which ancient and new, East and West, coalesce into an irresolvable but beautiful, non-pastiche, manifold destiny. Heavy Metal sub-tone singing, Tuvan-inspired throat singing, early 21st century European avant-garde instrumental techniques, American just intonation, and *sawari* (“beautiful noise,” an aesthetic of noise in traditional Japanese music) are no longer disparate elements focused and unfocused at will, no longer exotic and familiar. Instead, they have integrated with one another to such an extent that their individual qualities become part of a single fabric of sound. A democratic sonic landscape.”

Archaeologies of the Future was commissioned by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players with support from the *Northern California Composers Commissioning Program*, a program of the American Composer’s Forum, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter.

Philippe Leroux [b. 1959]

For more than twenty years, Philippe Leroux has opened ears worldwide with music that radiates energy, revealing the inner life of individual so-

norities against a musical background that is always buoyant and in flux. Already central to France’s contemporary music scene, Leroux writes spontaneously playful, yet carefully constructed scores that are winning him ever greater recognition from ensembles in the United States, chief among them the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

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

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

Even without delving into the technical components of Leroux’s style, one can appreciate the emphasis on motion in the titles of some of his best known works: the chamber piece *Fleuve* (River, 1988), the quintet *Continuo(ns)* (Continuo/Let’s continue, 1994) and the Violin Concerto (*d’*)*ALLER* ((on)GOING, 1995). Underlying these evocative titles are myriad ways of creating and dispelling momentum. In (*d’*)*ALLER*, for example, rapid scales and arpeggios seem to shrink and expand as notes are added or removed, forming a shimmering backdrop for the contest between soloist and ensemble. This concerto is the central panel in Le-

roux's triptych *Continuo(ns)–(d')ALLER–Plus Loin* (1999-2000), whose titles collectively spell out what might be considered an artistic credo: "Let us go farther." The MANCA Festival of new music, where the SFCMP will perform Leroux's *De la texture* later this month, has titled their current 30th anniversary season "continuons d'aller plus loin?" after Leroux's piece."

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

Leroux's works have been commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, IRCAM, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Festival Musica, Les Percussions de Strasbourg, Norway's BIT 20, and the Belgian group Ictus. His music has been heard around the world at the Tempo, Music Today, Agora, Roma-Europa, Nuove Synchronie, Bath and numerous other Festivals as well as in performance by New York's New Music Ensemble and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. In 1994, he received SACEM's Hervé Dugardin prize, and two years later, he won their second prize for *(d')ALLER*. He has since received SACEM's "prix de compositeurs," the André Caplet prize of the Académie des Beaux-Arts de l'Institut de France, the Paul and Mica Salabert prize for *Apocalypsis*, and the Arthur Honegger prize from the Fondation de France. From 1993-95, he was Resident at the Académie de France in Rome, and he has taught composition and computer music at IRCAM since 2001. In 2005-06, he was also Professor of Composition at McGill University in Montreal as part of the Fondation Langlois; from 2007-09 he was Composer in Residence at the Arsenal de Metz and with the Orchestre National de Lorraine. In 2008 he was Regents Lecturer at U. C. Berkeley, and since September 2009 he has been teaching at the University of Montreal.

Leroux, *De la Texture* (Of texture) (2006)

for flute/alto flute/slide whistle, clarinet/bass clarinet, guitar, percussion, piano, violin, viola, and cello

Describing *De la texture*, commissioned for the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players by the Library of Congress's Koussevitzky Foundation, Leroux explains that the work and its title spring from baroque ideas of texture and the composite rhythms of superimposed lines or voices: "By playing and listening to Jean-Philippe Rameau and François Couperin, I became aware that the connotations of decorative order that generally suggest the notion of ornamentation don't represent at all the immense rhythmic richness and polyrhythmic activity of this music. The superimposition of ornamental figurations (in different fingers of both hands playing the harpsichord, for example) generate complex rhythmic encounters that possess a definite musical function."

"In addition, my music has always involved the decomposition of rhythmic figures in a superimposition of different meters. In this piece, I have thus attempted to combine ornamentation, figures and polyrhythmic strata. To achieve this, I've constructed textures based upon the superimpositions of layers, recalling rhythmic formulas of the French military drum (even though I'm not particularly militaristic myself). There are flams, coups anglais.... I've used around thirty formulas just as I did in my piece *De la Vitesse* for six percussionists (2001).

"In a way, *De la Texture* is the tale of a Big Bang. There is an explosion. A material that consists of a multitude of sonic particles, of grains and rhythmic micro-cells is about to spread, moved by an energy that makes it consume the space of the concert hall, until it forms a spatial figure modeled after the square of the autumn constellation Pegasus. The three spaces that are the space of writing (canons-delays, resonance-reverberation), the acoustical space (concert hall), and the space of interpretation (the positions of the musicians in the hall) come together to form only one space."



Please join us for a reception in the lower lounge after the concert. Food and drink will be served, and scores from tonight's program will be on display.

The lower lounge is downstairs from the main lobby.

The Performers

David Tanenbaum, guitar, has been soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, and 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 Aolsharfe*, 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.

Conductor Sara Jobin has won wide acclaim particularly in the realm of opera. She has conducted performances of *Tosca*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Norma*, and the world premiere of Philip Glass's *Appomattox* for San Francisco Opera, and she led a production for that company of Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince* last year. She has also led productions for the San Francisco Opera Center including Conrad Susa's *Transformations*, *The Bear*, *Dr. Heidegger's Fountain of Youth*, and *Egon und Emilie*. Recent credits elsewhere include another Glass world premiere, *The Bacchae*, with the New York Shakespeare Festival; *Carmen* with Anchorage Opera; a live recording of John Musto's *Volpone* with Wolf Trap Opera; *Faust*, *Carmen*, *La Bohème*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and an upcoming *Figaro* with Tacoma Opera; performances of *Der fliegende Holländer* with Arizona Opera, and a fire opera version of *The Seven Deadly Sins* at the Crucible in Oakland. With Frederica von Stade, she issued the world premiere recording of Chris Brubeck's *River of Song*, which was written for her and the Tassajara Symphony. Recent orchestral debuts have included Symphony Silicon Valley and the Dayton Philharmonic, and later this season she conducts the Bochum Symphoniker in Germany. She will lead the SFCMP in Nice this November.

—Program Notes by Beth E. Levy

The Ensemble

The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players (SFCMP), now in its 39th 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 74 pieces and performed over 1,150 new works, including 72 U.S. and 141 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 *Contemporary Insights* series of intimate performances with conversation.

On November 15, 2009, the ensemble will perform in Nice, France at the 30th anniversary season of the MANCA new music festival.

The Staff

Christopher Honett has served as Director of the Harvard Group for New Music, as North American representative for music publisher Editions Henry Lemoine, and as Executive Director of the Manhattan Sinfonietta. A Ph.D. recipient in Music Composition from Harvard University, Chris's musical mentors have included Julian Anderson, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Chaya Czernowin, Mario Davidovsky, Joshua Fineberg, Magnus Lindberg, and Bernard Rands. His music has been performed by many professional ensembles, including Ensemble Intercontemporain, the Arditti String Quartet, and the Boston Conservatory Wind Ensemble. Mr. Honett is co-author of *The Listen*, a book for anyone curious about new music regardless of his or her musical education.

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 accomplished singer, Ms. Blanding has performed with the San Francisco Symphony Chorus and was a soloist with the U. C. 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 U. C. 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 U. C. 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.



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: \$3,000, not including tax.

100% of the sale's price benefits the ensemble.

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

A lifetime retrospective exhibition of Wiley's work, "What's It All Mean?", is currently on view at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC, through January 24, 2010.

