

San Francisco Contemporary Music Players

**Performers:**

Tod Brody, flute  
Sarah Rathke, oboe  
Jeffrey Anderle, clarinet  
Rufus Olivier, bassoon  
Julie Steinberg, piano  
Christopher Froh, percussion (Tan, Guo)  
Daniel Kennedy, percussion (Tan, Guo)  
Loren Mach, percussion (Tan, Guo)  
Benjamin Paysen, percussion (Tan)  
William Winant, percussion (Hurel)  
Roy Malan, violin  
Nanci Severance, viola  
Leighton Fong, cello

Robert Shumaker, *Recording Engineer*  
Gregory T. Kuhn, *Sound Engineer*



Tonight's performance of *Water Music* is supported in part by  
the Aaron Copland Fund for Music.

Tonight's performance of *Figures libres* is supported in part by The French-  
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from Cultural Services of the French Embassy, CulturesFrance, SACEM and the  
Florence Gould Foundation.



**His Own Space of Freedom**

Monday, April 26, 2010, 8:00 p.m.  
Herbst Theatre

**Christian Baldini, conductor**

**Manolis Manousakis, *A Time to Break Silence,*  
*Speaking Truth to Power* (2008)**

World Premiere  
(Approximate duration: 7 minutes)

Rufus Olivier, bassoon  
Kleopatra Korai, Video Art

**Tan Dun, *Water Music* (2004)**  
(Approximate duration: 20 minutes)

↻ *Intermission - 20 minutes* ↻

**Guo Wenjing, *Parade* (2003)**  
(Approximate duration: 16 minutes)

↻ *Stage change - 5 minutes* ↻

**Philippe Hurel, *Figure libres* (Free figures) (2000-2001)**  
(Approximate duration: 15 minutes)

I.  
II.  
III.

## Program Notes

### *Manolis Manousakis* [b.1975]

The Athens-based multimedia consortium Medea Electronique has several things going for it. First, its “guiding spirit,” the mythological Greek sorceress Medea, known for her independent and even violent passions. Second, the word-play suggested by “Medea” and “media.” And most important, the creativity and enthusiasm of its Co-Founder, Manolis Manousakis, one of the most striking voices among his generation of Greek composers. Yet to characterize Manousakis’s creative persona as a “voice,” may actually do him an injustice, for almost all of his pieces involve the visual as well as the musical—his work is shot through with theater.

Manousakis gained his footing in live theater while at Columbia College in Chicago, where he studied composition with Gustavo Leone before returning to earn a master’s degree in electroacoustic music with Tim Ward and Andreas Mniestris at the Ionian University in Corfu, Greece. Prior to his sojourn in Chicago, Manousakis was deeply engaged in both independent avant-garde theater and in the popular theater of his native country. Since that time, he has rarely been without a film or stage project and as a result has embraced a wide variety of stylistic influences. He notes, “I found that, through composing for music for the theater, I could explore different paths of writing—from baroque music when composing for Shakespearean plays to hard core electronica when composing for independent shows.” In addition to these disparate sound worlds, Manousakis cites as important influences the music of Cage, Schoenberg, Webern and Berg, as well as (not surprisingly) Xenakis and the works of a lesser known countryman, Yannis Christou, who produced theater scores and experimental music during the 1960s and early 1970s.

When asked to compare the theater and concert audiences, Manousakis replies: “I am pleased to say that the concert audience is younger and more eager to experience new music. Contemporary music in Greece is mainly being presented in small concert halls and independent productions find their way to the audience through small theater spaces that are dedicated to electronic and avant-garde music.” Increasingly, Manousakis has also made his works known internationally via video

and DVD production. Chief among these works are the live cinema performance *Case of Emergency* (2009), the multimedia interactive show *Project\_1* (2007), *Tetrachromia* and the twelve-video project *Stench on a White Shirt* (2005). The sound-world of *Tetrachromia*, which includes the subsections “Black” and “Blue,” involves the composer’s electronic manipulation of sound clips from performers (especially the Macedonian Saxophone Quartet) engaging in free improvisations that are in turn loosely based on the composer’s own scores. *Stench on a White Shirt* is a more extended treatment of romantic love (in the first half) and international politics (in the second half, which bears such subtitles as “Middle East of Eden,” “UN Resolution,” “Big Talk,” and “World Trade”).

While serving as director of the ElectromediaWorks Mixed Media Art Festival, Manousakis teaches Music Technology at UINDY University of Athens Campus. He has also made a living by writing for Greek television. In addition to helping found the Chicago Greek Film Festival, he has participated in other film festivals in Chicago and East Lansing, and musical events including the Future Sound of London concert in Athens, the “World in a Weekend” concert in Chicago, the CIME Concert in Valencia, a residency at Koumaria 2009, the Czech Republic’s Festival Forfest, the Media Arts Festival in San Diego, and several appearances in Italy. In 2006, Manousakis won an honorable mention for *Stench on a White Shirt* from Forecast Music, a New York City new music ensemble, and in 2007 his multimedia show *Medea Electronique Project 1* was performed at the Benaki Museum of Modern Art in Athens. Among his other recent projects is the score for a short film by Harris Germanidis called *Lust*. He is presently working on a new production titled *Monotonia*, a Greek-Swedish collaboration scheduled for staging this October.

In 2007, the Contemporary Music Players featured Rufus Olivier performing Manousakis’s *Sickert* (2005), for solo bassoon and electronics; tonight we experience the world premiere of a work written especially for Olivier: a work that, like so much of Manousakis’s music, invites both technological and political contemplation.

**Manousakis, *A Time to Break Silence, Speaking Truth to Power***  
*Inspired by the speech of the same name by Martin Luther King (2008)*  
*for bassoon, with introduction for video and electronics*

Describing *A Time to Break Silence*, which was envisioned in collaboration with bassoonist Rufus Olivier and includes a video introduction by Haris Germanidis and Kleopatra Korai, the composer writes: “This composition draws its inspiration from the life and tragic death of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., one of the most prominent leaders of the American Civil Rights Movement, and the youngest person to accept the Nobel Peace Prize for his work as a peacemaker, a promoter of non-violence, and an advocate for the equal treatment of all races. If only he had lived....”

“As with many major public figures, a nation-wide one minute of silence in memory of the deceased was observed. In several parts of the country, however, more often than not, this minute was not honored. In some schools it was the headmasters who didn’t allow it, elsewhere it was white pupils; racism and the oppression of black people were widespread in the late ‘60s.

“Forty years later, King’s fight for an equal society is as relevant as ever, with evidence showing that there is still a considerable racial gap in our society. Social issues abound in the domains of security, human rights and education. The scarcity of black political leaders of King’s or Malcolm X’s stature is evident and this has an obvious effect on the everyday lives of hundreds of thousands of people especially the poor—Hurricane Katrina’s effects on New Orleans is one sad example.

“The notion of ‘silence’ in the composition’s title is twofold: On one hand there’s the silence *not honored* in memoriam of King. On the other hand, it’s the silence instead of an answer that people receive from their political leaders when burning questions are asked. Why did people die in New Orleans? What turns everyday people into rioters? Why doesn’t social welfare work? What underlies police brutality cases? King himself had delivered a speech entitled ‘Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence.’ His speech could not be more up to date.”

**Tan Dun** [b. 1957]

“Growing up in rural China,” composer Tan Dun recalls, “I received my early musical training in such an organic way, mounting paper for instruments, singing a song in the village to the accompaniment of water, using ceramics to bang out the beat. I was surrounded by ritual music and ghost opera, not Bach, not Beethoven, not Brahms.” Tan in fact came to Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms rather late (at age nineteen) in a career that had already involved rice farming, playing fiddle, and arranging music and for the Peking Opera in Hunan Province during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). With the increased artistic freedom that marked the end of Maoist rule, Tan was accepted to the newly re-opened Central Conservatory, where he and his classmates “discovered” the formerly forbidden sounds of “new” music: Schoenberg, Bartok, Boulez, and others. In 1986, he came to New York City to study at Columbia University with Chou Wen-Chung, Mario Davidovsky, and George Edwards. Tan has maintained an American residence ever since, but he has never lost his fascination with sounds that are, in a word, elemental.

Tan’s music is renowned for its attention to sonic details—he was greatly influenced by composer John Cage’s dictum that sounds should be allowed to “be themselves.” In scores like the *Paper Concerto* or the *Earth Concerto*, and in the *Water Music* we will hear tonight, he has explored a wide spectrum of sounds made available by water, paper, rocks, and ceramic instruments. Yet Tan has never relinquished the idea of shaping his sounds to dramatic effect, as he told interviewer Ilja Stephan in 2005, “Without good structure the sound is wasted. You hear so many interesting things when you are walking in the mountains. You hear the wind, you hear the trees, you hear the animals. It’s sooo beautiful. But you can’t put it in a form to be performed. Meanwhile when you are walking on the street you hear all kinds of industrial sound, traffic sounds. If you have a good structure they become something else, they become art. I realized that music is the art of timing. Timing means the structure of space. The real meaning of being a composer is that you are the designer of a time structure, and you are the designer of a space structure. And you are not a melody writer.”

In addition to his impressive symphonic scores known as the Orchestral Theare series, Tan is perhaps best known for his operas: *Marco Polo* (1995), which in Tan’s words takes as its theme “the fusion of Western

avant-garde style with Eastern accent”; *Peony Pavilion* (1998), which provides new, rock-influenced music for a traditional Chinese Kunqu opera; the historical drama *Tea* (2002); and *The First Emperor* (2006), commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera House. Quite a number of Tan’s stage and screen scores have also yielded free-standing concert pieces. For example, he made a cello concerto for Yo-Yo Ma from his Academy Award-winning soundtrack to Ang Lee’s *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), and his Concerto for Pipa (Chinese plucked lute) involves extracts from the innovative *Ghost Opera* he wrote in 1994 (for string quartet and pipa, with water, metal, stones, and paper). As is the case in *Ghost Opera*, many of Tan’s scores combine western and Chinese instruments. Tan comments: “Most musicologists describe what I’m doing as mixing Western music and Eastern music. But what I’m actually doing is melding my past experience, which is Eastern music training, and my present experience, which is Western music training.... These two together I see as the equation  $1 + 1 = 1$ . You need to figure out technically where the sounds came from and how they meet naturally and become a new thing, a new language.”

Tan’s awards include a Grawemeyer Award, a Grammy, and an Oscar. He has also been honored by commissions for many important musical milestones. His *Symphony 1997: Heaven, Earth, Mankind* commemorated the transfer of Hong Kong from British to Chinese rule; in 2002 he conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the premiere of his *The Map: Concerto for Cello, Video and Orchestra* with Yo-Yo Ma as soloist; his *Paper Concerto* (2003) was featured at the opening season of the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles; his opera *The First Emperor* (2006) was premiered and video-recorded by the Met with Plácido Domingo in the title role; in 2008 he contributed the logo music for the Beijing Olympic Games, and composed his Piano Concerto “The Fire” for virtuoso Lang Lang. Tan was also a key figure in the so-called Google/YouTube Symphony, the first international, collaborative online orchestra, for which he wrote *Internet Symphony No. 1: “Eroica”* (2008).

### **Tan Dun, *Water Music* (2004)**

*for four percussionists*

There are perhaps as many water musics as there are bodies of water, or bodies in and around water. Many have heard George Frideric Handel’s retrospectively named *Water Music*, which is entirely free of liquid sounds. Fewer are familiar with composer Toru Takemitsu’s electronic score of the same name (1960) built on the sounds of a dripping faucet. Tonight we hear one of Tan’s contributions to this genre commissioned by the Nature Conservancy and premiered by the Talujon Percussion Ensemble in a singularly appropriate context: the Hall of Ocean Life at the American Museum of Natural History.

In fact this *Water Music* is just one of Tan’s scores to use water as a sound source. Beginning with his *Water Concerto* of 1998-99, Tan has sought to capture, amplify, and (to some degree) control the sounds made by water in various vessels, creating in the process what he calls “music that is for listening to in a visual way, and watching in an audio way.” In 2000, Tan added a pronounced spiritual dimension to his catalog of water music with the *Water Passion after St. Matthew*, which involves seventeen water bowls placed in the shape of a cross, Biblical text rendered with the vocal techniques of Chinese opera, and an overall aesthetic inspired by the water sounds the composer heard when his pregnant wife had her first ultrasound: “Suddenly I heard this beautiful water sound and I realized: this is the sound all human beings hear first.”

With no text to anchor its potential meanings, the *Water Music* we will hear tonight is more abstract and more open to interpretation. As a result, Tan pays tribute not just to the variety of hydrodynamic sound, but also to water’s capacity to transcend boundaries by overflowing, eroding, or seeping through. He writes: “Water is an element you can’t block. You can block land, you can say this is China and this is Russia, but water has no such frontiers.”

## Guo Wenjing [b.1956]

Last October, when Carnegie Hall chose to celebrate one of the cohorts of students first admitted to China's Central Conservatory when it re-opened its doors after the Cultural Revolution (the so-called "Class of 1978"), Guo was interviewed by Ilaria Maria Sala for the *Wall Street Journal*. He described his childhood experiences during the Cultural Revolution with a combination of ironic tongue-in-cheek and utter gravity: "You see, for me the Cultural Revolution was not as bad as all that, actually.... My father and mother were peasants from the north. They had joined the Communist Party early on and became soldiers in the People's Liberation Army." Safely ensconced in the proletariat, Guo was a spectator as the conflict reached his native Chongqing. He told another reporter, "It was dangerous, but I was a child. I enjoyed watching the fighting. Then my parents bought me a violin so I would stay indoors. That was my first introduction to music." Ironically, this gift bore musical fruits that were not just Communist but also rooted in the "bourgeois" music of the western classical tradition, as Guo explained to the *Wall Street Journal*: "When the Cultural Revolution started, in 1966, and the Eight Revolutionary Operas [created by Madame Mao] became required propaganda work in every city and province, each local Cultural bureau had to look for children with a suitable class background to receive musical training to perform them. This is how music arrived at my doorstep. Everything else was banned, of course, but our teacher could only use what he knew to instruct us: which is how I first came to play Handel, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven." "I loved it," Guo recalled, "but do not get me wrong. The Cultural Revolution was a tragedy. A disaster."

Unlike his classmates at the Central Conservatory—Tan Dun, Zhou Long, Chen Qigang, Bright Sheng, and Chen Yi, among others—Guo has chosen to live out his career in China. He has taught for decades at the Conservatory, and served as head of the composition department for many years. Despite the relative freedom of exchange between China and the West that characterized the 1980s-90s, and despite the success of his *Suspended Coffins on the Cliffs in Sichuan* (1982) when it was premiered in Berkeley in 1983, Guo made his first substantial trip outside China only in 1996-97, when the Asian Cultural Council invited him to spend six months in New York. More recently, performances of his four operas have increased the frequency and duration of his trips abroad but have done little to disturb his connection to his homeland.

He says, "I don't know what a Chinese composer should be... My purpose is to create, and I feel that there's ground beneath my feet."

As his *Suspended Coffins* suggests, many of Guo scores, whether they use western instruments or traditional Chinese ones, take inspiration from his native Sichuan province. While the scoring of *Suspended Coffins*—for pianos and percussion—shows the influence of Stravinsky and Bartók, this piece also marked his graduation from the Central Conservatory and it pays tribute to the folk idioms and the landscape of Sichuan. "Actually," he told journalist Zhao Yang of *CRI English*, "my music is about Sichuan people rather than Sichuan landscapes. They depict the stubborn spirit of the residents there and my love for my hometown." His 1987 symphonic poem *Shu Dao Nan* (Sichuan Road, or Hard Are the Ways of Sichuan) includes a choral rendering of a text by the renowned poet Li Bai which describes the steep roads of the local mountains. His concerto for bamboo flute, *Chou Kong Shan* (Sorrowful, Desolate Mountain, premiered in Sweden by the Göteborg Symphony Orchestra under Neeme Järvi) commemorates a similar, craggy landscape. Even when he leaves "home" to visit other musical regions, Guo's scores often relate to real or imagined geography—for example, in *Melodies of Western Yunnan* (1994, featuring the dadi percussion and strings) and *Sound from Tibet* (2001, which combines Chinese and western instruments).

In 1992, after his chamber score *She Huo* was performed in Amsterdam, Guo was urged to compose an opera; he chose Lu Xun's novel *Diary of a Madman*, and the resulting opera, *Wolf Club Village* (1994), would become by most accounts the first opera in which a cast of western singers were required to learn their parts in Chinese. Premiered in Holland and later performed in at least seven countries, it set the mold for his most famous opera, *The Poet Li Bai* (1997). As local hero, national figure, and artist, Li Bai was an ideal operatic subject, and Guo encouraged his librettist to emphasize the dramatic narrative of the poet's biography rather than his more contemplative verse. All the same, the composer attempted to replicate some of Li Bai's Tang Dynasty aesthetic in his own musical language. Guo writes: "Li Bai liked to demonstrate profound meanings through simple words. I hope my music can do the same. After audiences listen to my opera, they should not only think about the music, but themselves, their lives and their destinies."

Guo's scores have been performed by the Kronos Quartet, Arditti

Quartet, Ensemble Modern, Nieuw Ensemble, Atlas Ensemble, Cincinnati Percussion Group, Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, Göteborg Symphony, China Philharmonic Orchestra, Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra, and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2008, he provided music for the Beijing Olympics opening ceremony (for the sequence called “Moveable-Type Printing”) and his scores have also been heard at Lincoln Center, the Frankfurt Opera, Berlin Konzerthaus, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and at festivals around the world. Among his recent scores are *Journeys* (for soprano and orchestra) premiered by the Hong Kong Philharmonic under Edo de Waart in 2004 and featuring a text taken not from Li Bai but from a contemporary poet, Xi Chuan; and a concerto for erhu (a bowed Chinese string instrument) co-commissioned by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and the Bavarian Radio concert series Musica Viva. On bringing his scores to such an international array of audiences, Guo writes: “I believe that audience types have nothing to do with nationalities. People who like classical music in Central City [Colorado] are similar to classical music lovers in Beijing. Those who like pop music in America are also similar to pop audiences in China. It’s the type of audience I have in mind, rather than their nationality....”

### **Wenjing, *Parade* (2003)**

*for three players on six Beijing opera gongs*

Given that Guo is responsible for the scores to twenty feature films and at least twenty-five movies for Chinese television, perhaps it should come as no surprise that his treatment of the three percussionists in *Parade* (2003) is inherently dramatic. In fact, *Parade* is a sequel to the 1995 trio *Drama*, in which the three percussionists are also required to speak and to sing. In addition to his four western operas, he has composed new scores for three “Beijing (Peking) Operas,” and it is from this world that he has drawn the clangorous but strangely expressive language of *Parade*. With vibration piling onto vibration, the six gongs are capable of sheer, overwhelming force. Yet they can also “speak” with the inflections of a human voice or voices. Whether epic or intimate, every moment in *Parade* requires an intensity of concentration and choreography of movement among the three players admirably on display tonight.

### **Philippe Hurel [b. 1955]**

In 2003, Philippe Hurel observed that “From Debussy through to spectral composers, [French] music has been organized around harmony.” He thus encapsulates the historical importance of both the French impressionists’ colorful chords and French composers’ more recent attention to the resonant harmonics inherent in the overtone series above any fundamental pitch. Yet if this formulation is also meant to reveal something about Hurel’s own music, then we must consider “harmony” in the very broadest sense of the term—for Hurel has always coupled his attention to pitch with a tendency toward counterpoint and, in recent years, with a desire to enliven his music with a wide range of rhythmic characters, including passages reminiscent of jazz.

Hurel worked with Betsy Jolas and Ivo Malec during his years at the Paris Conservatoire. He also studied computer music privately with Tristan Murail in 1983-84 and was influenced by the example of Gérard Grisey. Not surprisingly, his first compositions paid special attention to the relationships between harmony and timbre (tone color) and to the gradual metamorphosis of musical materials. In his works for solo instruments, he tends to exploit the entire range of timbral possibilities, from the guttural to the ethereal. When he chooses to use electronics, he typically blurs the boundaries between acoustic and synthetic sound. During the late 1980s, Hurel became increasingly preoccupied with the internal counterpoint of his music, initiating a series of works with ever denser notation and ever more “saturated,” rigorous polyphony.

Beginning in the 1990s, a more radical transformation took place as the composer came to grips with rhythms drawn not just from the classical tradition, but from jazz and popular music as well. Between his *Six miniatures en trompe-l’oeil*, written in 1991, and the *Quatre Variations* of 1999-2000, Hurel recalls that he was “trying to consolidate two worlds whose coexistence sometimes seems impossible: rhythms derived from jazz and funk, together with the harmonic and formal work achieved through spectral techniques.” For whatever reason, the vibraphone seems to have had a special role in broadening Hurel’s rhythmic frame of reference. In addition to being a dominant player in his sextet *...à mesure* (1996), it formed half of the featured duo in his *Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey* (1999), which the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players performed in 2005.

Since 2000, Hurel's works have been inspired less by jazz and more by an attempt to synthesize the compositional facets of his earlier scores. As we will hear tonight, in the octet *Figures libres* (2000-01), he has deepened his interest in counterpoint, kinetic energy, and harmonic ingenuity. Choreographer François Raffinot, who took the *Six miniatures en trompe-l'oeil* as the basis for his 1997 ballet *Rift*, describes the visceral immediacy of Hurel's music, offering what might be considered a "concert-goers' guide" to the works of this innovative French composer: "Listen to these evolving textures, the constant renewal," Raffinot writes. "And then listen for the brusque sonorous signals that return from earlier passages. The incandescent wash of sound suddenly crystallizes in place, stopped short in the midst of its progression. A musical moment suspended, as a melting lava flow plunges into the sea and freezes... before bursting anew under the pressure of new acoustic waves."

In addition to being a fellow at the Villa Medici from 1986-88, Hurel has won the Förderpreis from the Siemens-Stiftung in Munich as well as two prizes from SACEM (the French society of authors, composers, and music publishers). His music has been commissioned by many international ensembles including Ensemble Intercontemporain, IRCAM, the New York New Music Ensemble, the Orchestre de Paris, Radio-France, Les Percussions de Strasbourg, Interface, Ensemble Recherche, Itinéraire, Bit20, Cité de la Musique, the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo's Shizuoka Hall, and the French Ministry of Culture, and his scores have been conducted by famous conductors such as Pierre Boulez, David Robertson, Jonathan Nott, Esa Pekka Salonen, Kent Nagano, Pierre-André Valade, François Xavier Roth, Christian Eggen, Lorraine Vaillancourt, Ludovic Morlot, Reinbert de Leeuw, Bernard Kontarsky. Hurel taught at IRCAM from 1997-2001 and has served as composer-in-residence at the Arsenal de Metz and the Philharmonie de Lorraine. In 1990, he founded Ensemble Court-circuit and became its artistic director. His tribute to French writer George Perec, *CANTUS* (2006), was commissioned by the French government for Françoise Kubler and Ensemble Accroche-Note, and *Step* was commissioned by the Fonds Franco-américain and premiered by the New York New Music Ensemble. In 2007-08, New York's ICE Ensemble gave three concerts devoted to his music and in 2009 two new works were premiered by Abbaye de Royaumont, and the Nickel ensemble of Tel Aviv gave the premiere of a piece commissioned by the Siemens Foundation. This year sees the premiere of *Interstices* by the Percussion Ensemble of Strasbourg and an

orchestral score for the Cottbus Philharmonic. Other current commissions include works for the CIRM in Nice, Ensemble 2e2m, the Liege Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Philharmonic Orchestra of Radio France, among others.

### **Hurel, *Figures libres* (Free figures) (2000-01)**

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

Commissioned by Barbara and Luigi Polla, and dedicated to their daughter Rachele Isadora Polla, *Figures libres* represents in a way the fulfilment or continuation of processes also apparent in Hurel's companion piece *Pour Luigi* (1994). According to critic Eric Denut, this earlier score shows the composer in a mood "so extremely rigorous that it seems to leave no place for contingency." With this new score, however, Hurel chose his title with a different goal in mind. He explains, "What I wanted to show in the title is that certain emblematic figures escape the constraints given at the start: the idea that it is possible for an artist or athlete to find within the formalized discourse of network of constraints, his own space of freedom."

The play of control and freedom, has left its mark on many levels of Hurel's score. Perhaps closest to the surface is the possibly jazzy tinge of the composer's main motives (and some of his harmonies), recalling not the sweetness of swing, but the propulsion of bebop. As Denut observes, "the immediate pleasure procured by the Hurelian groove" avoids the temptation of postmodern pastiche; the form "is still structured by processes." In *Figures libres*, these processes are mercurial, almost Haydnesque in their earnest, yet humorous working out of material. With its emphasis on a recurring "figure," the whole score resembles a fractured rondo, or better yet a fractal rondo, whose constituent parts are rotated around the ensemble to generate new patterns of self-similar material through iteration, recombination, and transformation.

—Program Notes by Beth E. Levy

## The Conductor

The dynamic work of **Christian Baldini**, conductor and composer, has taken him around the world, to guest conduct the Buenos Aires Philharmonic (Argentina), to direct opera for the Aldeburgh Festival (United Kingdom), and as a featured composer at the Acanthes Festival in France. After conducting the Sao Paulo Symphony Orchestra (OESP, Brazil), critic Arthur Nestrovski from the *Folha de Sao Paulo* praised this “charismatic young conductor” for his “musicality” and for his commitment to conducting Brahms’ First Symphony by heart.”

Baldini’s music has been performed throughout Europe, South America, North America and Asia by orchestras and ensembles including the Orchestre National de Lorraine (France), Southbank Sinfonia (London), New York New Music Ensemble, Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Daegu Chamber Orchestra (South Korea), Chronophonie Ensemble (Freiburg), International Ensemble Modern Academy (Frankfurt). His music appears on CD on the Pretal Label, and has been broadcast on SWR (German Radio) as well as in the National Classical Music Radio of Argentina. He has also conducted contemporary Italian music for the RAI Trade label.

Baldini’s work has received awards in several competitions including the top prize at the Seoul International Competition for Composers (South Korea, 2005), the Tribune of Music (UNESCO, 2005), the Ossia International Competition (Rochester, NY, 2008), the Daegu Chamber Orchestra International Competition (South Korea, 2008), and the Sao Paulo Orchestra International Conducting Competition (Brazil, 2006). He has been an assistant conductor with the Britten-Pears Orchestra (England) and a cover conductor with the National Symphony Orchestra (Washington, DC). After teaching at the State University of New York in Buffalo, Baldini is now an Assistant Professor at the University of California, Davis, where he serves as the Music Director of the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra.

## The Soloist

**Rufus Olivier** is the principal bassoonist with the San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Ballet, and former bassoonist with the San Francisco Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. He is a founding member of the Anchor Chamber Players, the Midsummer Mozart Orchestra, and the Stanford Wind Quintet. He has been guest soloist with numerous orchestras throughout the United States, Japan, and France, and has premiered many new works for the bassoon. A member of the music faculties of Stanford University, Azusa Pacific University and Mills College, he is also known for his many movie and TV soundtracks including the Grammy-winning soundtrack *Elmo in Grouchland*. In 1993, Olivier received the Seal of The City and County of San Francisco, as a recognition of “Exemplary Accomplishment on the Occasion of Black History Month.” In 2005 he won the Award of Merit from the United States Postal Service and was featured in a cover story for the magazine *International Musician*, published by the American Federation of Musicians. Olivier joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1991.



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.*

