

San Francisco Contemporary Music Players
Steven Schick, Artistic Director

**Zone 1: in which crisscrossing vectors
enliven the ear and oxygenate the sonic space**

Monday, October 3, 2011 - 8:00 pm - Herbst Theatre

JOSH LEVINE

Transparency (Part I) (2004, rev. 2010)

Approximate duration: 6 minutes

Daniel Kennedy, percussion

EDGARD VARÈSE

Octandre (1923)

Approximate duration: 8 minutes

I. Assez lent

II. Très vif et nerveux

III. Grave – Animé et jubilatoire

JOHN LUTHER ADAMS

Clouds of Forgetting, Clouds of Unknowing (1991-95)

Approximate duration: 65 minutes

This concert is underwritten in part by
the Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation,
the Wells Fargo Foundation,
and Meet The Composer's MetLife Creative Connections program.



The Performers

Tod Brody, flute
Stacey Pelinka, flute (Adams)
Sarah Rathke, oboe
Jeff Anderle, clarinet
Bill Kalinkos, clarinet (Adams)
Rufus Olivier, bassoon
Lawrence Ragent, horn
Kevin Rivard, horn (Adams)
Jeff Biancalana, trumpet
Hall Goff, trombone
Julie Steinberg, piano
Karen Rosenak, celesta
Daniel Kennedy, percussion
Christopher Froh, percussion
Roy Malan, violin
Susan Freier, violin
Nanci Severance, viola
Stephen Harrison, cello
Richard Worn, bass



Robert Shumaker, recording engineer

Please join us in the lower lounge
for a reception after the concert.

Program Notes

JOSH LEVINE (b. 1959)

Josh Levine reflects on his craft: “There often emerges in my music a nostalgia for the traditionally ‘beautiful’ music that I neither want to write nor wish to deny, [the music] that always seems to appear in the form of solitary, trapped, dislocated, deforming remnants of melodies and romantic gestures.” As these words suggest, Levine’s music is communicative in elusive ways, always remaining open to multiple interpretations.

Born in Oregon, Levine studied composition at U. C. San Diego (principally with Brian Ferneyhough), the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris (with Guy Reibel), and the Musik-Akademie in Basel, Switzerland (with Balz Trümpy), where he also obtained a diploma in classical guitar with Konrad Ragossnig. During 1994-95 he continued his education in composition and computing at the prestigious new music center IRCAM [Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique-Musique], in Paris. He began teaching at San Francisco State University in 2000, and in 2008 joined the faculty at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music.

Levine’s early interest in electronics is apparent in a number of his works, including his prize-winning *Tel* (1985-87) and *Zwischenwelt* (1989-91), for percussion, small ensemble, and computer electronics. His *Belle du désert* (1995-99), which was premiered in revised form in Switzerland in 2001, combines voice, percussion and electronics in what he called a “paean to love, a hymn to memory, a tribute to the enigmatic interplay of things that are clear and the still unknowable reasons for them.” More recently, he speaks of his music as an exploration of extremes (motion and stasis, loudness and silence) and of concrete musical gestures. He writes: “Among the aesthetic traits that characterize my work, there is a pronounced gestural quality stemming from my tendency to visualize musical materials, be it as actions (including, importantly, the physicality of performance), behavior, or moving objects in a kind of theater of organized sound. Nature-inspired processes of growth and decay result often in extreme states of textural density and rarefaction. Multiple time strata interweave through the pieces, manifesting parallel evolutions of musical structures and/or different musical materials acting concurrently in their own ‘time spaces’.”

As we will hear in *Transparency (Part I)* tonight, Levine is capable of coaxing remarkable eloquence from sometimes surprising sound sources. His keen ear for nuances of tone color may come in part from his work with music technology but it comes at least as much from his own experience as a soloist and ensemble player. An active guitarist, Levine has collaborated with the Basel ISCM Ensemble, the Ensemble Contrechamps (Geneva), and San Diego’s SONOR Ensemble in such challenging scores as Ferneyhough’s *Transit*, Mauricio Kagel’s *Kantrimijsik*, and Pierre Boulez’s *Le Marteau sans maître*. A

number of his own pieces make use of the guitar's unique capabilities, including *Former Selves* (1999-2007), for guitar, ensemble, and electronics; *Downstream* (1991-92) for guitar and computer-processed guitar sounds; *in gleicher Weise umher* (1989-91) for soprano, violin, guitar and ensemble; and *Glimpses* (1986; rev. 1988), for flute, viola and guitar.

Levine has received commissions from the Ensemble Intercontemporain (Paris), Ensemble Contrechamps (Geneva), Pro Helvetia (Switzerland), the Groupe de musique expérimentale (Bourges), and the Festival Rümlingen in Switzerland, among others. His music has been performed at Merkin Hall in New York City, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Cité de la Musique, the Pompidou Center and IRCAM in Paris, the ISCM World New Music Days in Stockholm, the British Music Information Centre in London, and at festivals worldwide. Levine received Weill and Gluck Fellowships from U. C. San Diego, a grant from the Fondation Patifno and the Republic of Geneva, First Prize and a special jury prize at the Bourges International Electroacoustic Music Competition, a Stipend Prize from Darmstadt's Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, and a residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris.

Levine, *Transparency (Part I)* (2004; rev. 2010)

for solo percussion

The composer writes: "This is the first part of what was to be a four-piece cycle scored for four triangles, bass drum, maracas (absent in Part I), and sandpaper. The title refers to a line in Octavio Paz's poem, 'Ustica': 'Mortalidad es transparencia' (Mortality is transparency).

"The focal point of the cycle is the bass drum. It serves as a site for musical action that often seems to want to transcend the instrument's typical character and limitations. Increasingly the player strives to delineate multiple timbres and musical layers, as if trying to teach the instrument to transform its body, to speak or even sing. The triangles, though at the other end of the piece's timbral spectrum, share the bass drum's persistent sustain and comparatively limited expressive possibilities. They, too, are eventually called on to engage in a more nuanced and 'expressive' discourse than their ostensible nature might imply. They can be understood not just as the separate, strongly contrasting voice they appear to be, but also as another facet in the journey of a complex and evolving musical personality.

"*Transparency (Part I)* was written for the remarkable Aiyun Huang, who gave its world premiere in September 2004 in Geneva, Switzerland. The music is lovingly dedicated to my mother, Gloria Levine. As I composed the piece, her mortality was becoming ever clearer; her passing, shortly after the premiere of Part I, in a sense completed the cycle before I had the chance to finish the other movements."

EDGARD VARÈSE (1883-1965)

Although he frequently invoked the idea of a compositional “laboratory,” Edgard Varèse decried the label “experimental music,” declaring: “My experimenting is done before I write the music. Afterward it is the listener who must experiment.” Famously distant from both neoclassicism (which he called “tradition lowered to the level of bad habits”) and from twelve-tone serialism (which he compared to a “hardening of the arteries”), Varèse forged his own path. “I have always avoided groups and isms,” he later wrote. “The futurists believed in reproducing sounds and noises literally; I believe in the metamorphosis of sounds into music.” Distinguishing himself from the Dadaist in the visual arts, he noted, “I am not an iconoclast.” Varèse’s disavowal of iconoclasm may seem to fall strangely from the lips of a composer who replaced the symphony with a percussion orchestra and brought sirens into the concert hall. Yet his words ring true. Varèse was always more interested in building up than tearing down.

Born in France, Varèse moved with his family to Italy in 1893, traveled on his own to Paris in 1903 (training first at the Schola Cantorum and later at the Conservatoire), and then took himself to Berlin to study with Ferruccio Busoni, inspired by the older composer’s *New Esthetic of Music*, which he called “a milestone in my musical development.” Varèse destroyed his scores from these early years, but he found in Busoni a mentor and a kindred spirit who shared his dissatisfaction with many aspects of the musical scene particularly with the limitations of traditional instruments: “I dream of instruments obedient to my thought and which with their contribution of a whole new world of unsuspected sounds, will lend themselves to the exigencies of my inner rhythm.” With such tools at his disposal, Varèse wrote, “when new instruments will allow me to write music as I conceive it, the movement of sound-masses, of shifting planes, will be clearly perceived in my work, taking the place of linear counterpoint.” The long quest for such instruments, eventually realized through electronic music, would become one of the key factors in determining the shape of the composer’s career.

In 1915, Varèse came to New York City, where he would live out his days in a strange mixture of adulation and alienation. He quickly became central to New York’s new music scene, and in 1921 became the co-founder (with Carlos Salzedo) of the International Composers’ Guild, responsible for bringing dozens of new American and European works to new audiences. After it was discontinued, he founded the Pan-American Association of Composers. At the same time, Varèse unleashed his creative energy on the instruments he found most satisfyingly noisy: the percussion family. His *Hyperprism* (1923) brings no less than seven percussionists on stage, along with nine woodwind and brass players. In 1931, he wrote the pioneering all-percussion score *Ionisation*, solidifying his stance that volume, tone color, and rhythm had more to offer the modern composer than the conventional pitches and harmonies of the piano keyboard.

In the early 1930s, Varèse tried to convince both the Bell Telephone Company and the Guggenheim Foundation to sponsor a true music laboratory—where music research could be freely pursued using the latest electronic means. With just a few modifications to existing technology, he argued, a composer could create and differentiate “masses,” “planes,” and “beams” of sound in order to create “an acoustical arrangement [that] would permit the delimitation of what I call ‘zones of intensities.’ These zones would be differentiated by various timbres or colors and different loudnesses.... The role of color or timbre would be completely changed from being incidental, anecdotal, sensual, or picturesque; it would become an agent of delineation, like the different colors on a map separating different areas, and an integral part of form....”

In 1953, the anonymous gift of an Ampex tape recorder marked the end of Varèse’s creative dry spell and enabled two of his most influential works. In the words of composer Chou Wen-Chung, former student and later advocate and editor of Varèse’s output, “When his dream of half a century finally became a reality, he brought forth triumphantly *Déserts* (1950-54) and *Poème électronique* (1957-58), fruits of those eloquent years of silence!” He had completed no new scores since 1936. In *Déserts*, Varèse alternates passages for traditional instruments and passages for tape-recorded “organized sound.” (He wrote: “I decided to call my music ‘organized sound,’ and myself not a musician, but a worker in rhythms, frequencies and intensities.”) His *Poème électronique* was created to fill the Philips Pavilion at the Brussels Exposition, a building designed by Le Corbusier with substantive input from composer-mathematician Iannis Xenakis. Thousands upon thousands of people experienced Varèse in this context: more than 400 speakers installed at carefully coordinated points on the structure’s curved walls, projecting sounds that run the gamut of human existence—from the industrial machine noises favored by the futurists, to the sounds of tolling bells and disembodied voices, to electronically-generated sounds of Varese’s own invention. Alongside his clangorous percussion work and his carefully chiseled acoustic scores, these electronic scores made the composer’s “inner rhythm” audible across an extraordinarily wide range of listeners: from artists and architects to the young Frank Zappa, who approached Varèse (unsuccessfully) to ask for composition lessons. It is intriguing to imagine what might have emerged if Varèse had accepted Zappa as a student, if he had chosen not to destroy the music of his early years, if he had found instruments in the 1930s to match his own imagination. But in each of the dozen or so works that constitute his artistic legacy Varèse created a world worthy of extensive exploration.

Varèse, *Octandre* (1923)

for flute/piccolo, oboe, Bb clarinet/Eb clarinet, bassoon, French horn, trumpet, trombone, and double bass

Like a number of the composer's titles, Varèse's *Octandre* plays at the boundaries between science and imagination. "Octandrous" flowers are those with eight stamens, and they surely call to mind intricate patterns of fertility and efflorescence. Its motivic cells germinate like seeds from the outset. *Octandre* is one of the few scores that Varèse chose to divide into movements—three in this case. Each is structurally distinct from the others, though they are usually played without pause and they share occasional "seed" motives and gestures. Varèse would later explain, "each of my works discovers its own form." Enhancing the impression of growth in *Octandre* is the fact that each movement begins with a solo instrument and blossoms into something more.

Each work in Varèse's small oeuvre is crucial to understanding his development as a composer; *Octandre* was also crucial to establishing the composer's reputation in the 1920s. When the score was first performed in New York in 1924, conducted by its dedicatee E. Robert Schmitz at one of the International Composers' Guild concerts, it won a rare encore, and an important champion. As musicologist Carol Oja has pointed out, this was the work that solidified the composer's esteem in the eyes of influential critic Paul Rosenfeld, who praised the score's singular toughness and focus, calling it "hard of surface and machine-sharp of edge... beautiful with intense economicality and concentratedness. The themes were stated in cablegram style."

Indeed, *Octandre* is both raw and refined, and it has remained one of the composer's most frequently programmed scores. If some of the melodic contours at the outset of the first movement call to mind the wind and brass writing of Igor Stravinsky, they evoke the Stravinsky of the elemental, "primitivist," or Russian period rather than the Stravinsky whose own Octet catalyzed the neoclassicism that Varèse professed to disdain. Otto Klemperer conducted *Octandre* a few years later and Mexican composer Carlos Chávez brought it to large audiences of students and colleagues in Mexico City, claiming in print: "Here is the gold of pure music.... His technique is the essence of his nature. Varèse creates music, he does not make harmonized melodies or melodious harmonies. He has an all-embracing, sonorous concept which comprises all possible material means—a phenomenon common to all musicians of genius."

JOHN LUTHER ADAMS (b. 1953)

“My music has always been profoundly influenced by the natural world and a strong sense of place. In my recent work, I have begun to explore a territory I call ‘sonic geography,’—a region that exists somewhere between place and culture, between human imagination and the world around us. I hope to move beyond landscape painting in sound toward a music which, in its own way, is landscape—a music which creates its own inherently sonic presence and sense of place.” Although these words were written by John Luther Adams some years ago, they still capture key insights from a composer whom critic Kyle Gann has called “the John Muir of music, reporting back to us from not only the wilderness of the world, but of the soul.”

Howard Klein of New World Records, an early champion of Adams’s work, identifies three key factors in the composer’s development: “his beginnings as a percussionist, his identification with a post-minimalist aesthetic and his commitment to the natural world.” Adams got his start as a drummer and, in his own way, he united two important streams in American music history: the garage rock band and the experimental percussion music of composers like Varèse, John Cage, Lou Harrison, and Harry Partch. An early fascination with Frank Zappa (another boundary-crossing musician) brought him to the California Institute of the Arts, where he studied with Leonard Stein and James Tenney. Tenney, along with Cage and Morton Feldman, remains an important influence.

Adams has made his home in Alaska since the mid-1970s, drawn there by a restless spirit, a smattering of performance opportunities (he was timpanist and principal percussionist with the Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra and, later, the Arctic Chamber Orchestra), and a deep environmental calling. As lobbyist and “rabble-rouser” for the Alaska Coalition, he worked to achieve a milestone in U. S. conservation, the Alaska Lands Act. In the process he met and married his wife Cynthia and crystalized his personal vision of the composer-as-ecologist. He writes: “As a composer, I believe that music can contribute to the awakening of our ecological understanding. By deepening our awareness of our connections to the earth, music can provide a sounding model for the renewal of human consciousness and culture. Over the years this belief has led me from music inspired by the songs of birds, to landscape painting with tones, to elemental noise and beyond, in search of an ecology of music.”

As the composer intimates, his early scores celebrate the natural world with a kind of ecstatic reverence—for its openness, its vastness, and its own ethereal music-makers. In *songbirdsounds* (1974-80), he offered creative transcriptions of bird song for piccolos, percussion and ocarinas; in *Night Peace* (1976) two choirs echo one another in luminous showers of sound and moments of repose. His titles are full of lightness, whiteness, silence, and peace: *The Far Country of Sleep* (1988), for orchestra; *Dream in White on White* (1992), for strings and harp; *In a Treeless Place, Only Snow* (1999), for celesta, harp, vibraphones, and

string quartet; *In the White Silence* (1998), for orchestra; and *The Light That Fills the World* (1999-2000) for orchestra. Adams invites us to hear such music against an Arctic backdrop, measuring its scope and scale against the vastness of Alaska. But as countless listeners can testify, his music also insists that we graft it onto each new performing space, and allow it to take root in each individual ear.

During the mid-1990s, gentler evocations of natural process began to overlap with pieces that explore nature in all its violence and inexorability. “Gradually,” Adams notes, “I’ve been drawn to the ‘noisier’ sounds of nature—ocean waves and waterfalls, storm winds and thunder, glaciers crashing into the sea—those elemental voices which resonate so profoundly in the human mind and spirit.” One can hear some of these forces at work in *Earth and the Great Weather* (1990-93), subtitled “A Sonic Geography of the Arctic” and commissioned by the Alaska Festival of Native Arts. In this 90-minute work, Adams combines strings and vocal quartet (rendered even more ethereal through a digital delay process), with four percussionists, four speaking voices (intoning Inuit and Athabaskan languages) and recorded sounds from the Arctic landscape. The power of unbridled nature breaks forth in the visceral percussion quartet *Strange and Sacred Noise* (1991-97), which ranges “from the threshold of audibility to the threshold of pain,” building on “images from the natural world” as well as a new preoccupation with “the mathematics of dynamic systems.” Hand in hand with this fascination have come new techniques and technologies for performance. In *The Mathematics of Resonant Bodies* (2002), for example, Adams creates “composite sonorities of noise and tone” by incorporating pre-recorded percussion tracks (performed by Steven Schick and digitally modified) into the performance of a live, percussion soloist.

The twinning of science and art in Adams’s oeuvre is most fully displayed in *The Place Where You Go to Listen*, created in 2004-06 and installed as a “long-term sound-and-light environment” in the Museum of the North at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Here, in a small room, against white walls, glass panels take on continuously changing spectra of color and streams of electronic sound emerge and subside in response to raw meteorological, seismological, and geomagnetic data fed into a computer in real-time: the position of sun, moon and stars, the presence of the aurora borealis, the sudden tremor or quiescent glide of geological motion.

Adams acknowledges a paradox in the evolving relationship between his ecological aims and his technological medium: “It’s perhaps ironic that this imaginary world intended to celebrate our connections to the natural world could not have been created without the machine of the computer.” At the same time, he credits music technology with guiding him from a creative process that is about intentional imagination toward one that is about listening. “If music grounded in tone is a means of sending messages to the world, then music grounded in noise is a means of receiving messages *from* the world.”

Taking its title from a place on the Arctic coast where legend tells of an Inupiaq woman gaining insight from the voices of whales, birds, and other spirits, *The Place Where You Go to Listen* encapsulates beautifully the act of contemplation, of commemoration, that so much of his music inspires.

Adams is the author of *Winter Music: Composing the North* (2004) and *The Place Where You Go to Listen: In Search of an Ecology of Music* (2009), and his scores have been featured by Bang on a Can, the Almeida Opera, the FLUX Quartet, the Paul Drescher Ensemble, the Sundance Institute, Arena Stage, California E. A. R. Unit, and Percussion Group Cincinnati. In addition to teaching at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, Bennington College, and the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, he has served as composer-in-residence with the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra, the Anchorage Opera, and Alaska Public Radio and as president of the American Music Center. Adams has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, Opera America, the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, the American Music Center, Meet the Composer, Lila Wallace Arts Partners, and the Alaska State Council on the Arts. Recently, he won the Nemmers Prize from Northwestern University and a Heinz Award, intended to recognize “individuals who are working toward real and inspirational solutions for environmental problems.”

Adams, *Clouds of Forgetting, Clouds of Unknowing* (1991-95)
for seventeen musicians

The composer writes: “Quantum physics has recently confirmed what shamans and mystics, poets and musicians have long known: The universe is more like music than like matter. It may well be that our most fundamental relationship to the great mysteries is one of listening. Through sustained, concentrated attention to the fullness of the present moment, we listen for the breath of being, the voice of God.

“*Clouds of Forgetting, Clouds of Unknowing* is a work of musical contemplation, an attempt to consecrate a small time and space for extraordinary listening. The work is titled after *The Cloud of Unknowing*, a fourteenth-century mystical Christian text, which has much in common with the teachings of contemplative traditions throughout the world, be they Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Sufi, Native American, or other. The essence of the contemplative experience is voluntary surrender, purposeful immersion in the fullness of a presence far larger than ourselves...”

“In Western music, melody and harmony are equivalents of figure and ground. Together, they constitute a kind of musical perspective, which evolved parallel to that of Renaissance painting. In the musical textures of *Clouds*, I hoped to lose perspective. Surrendering the idea of self-expression, I placed my faith in the instruments themselves, and in a few elementally simple sonorities and gestures. My aspiration here was not so much to compose a *piece* of music, as

it was to evoke a *wholeness* of music, a sounding presence somehow equivalent to that of a vast landscape. Still, perhaps unavoidably for me, this music has a certain starkness, reminiscent of the light, atmosphere, and landforms of the Arctic.

“In painting, chromaticism means color. In music, all too often, it means charcoal grey. After years of composing in predominantly consonant harmonies, exploring the harmonic series and non-tempered tunings, I chose in *Clouds* to return to the rich complexities and ambiguities of equal temperament and chromaticism, to discover, if I could, new colors within them.

“Despite its unrelenting chromaticism, this music is modal. Over the course of an hour, it moves slowly, but inexorably through a spectrum of chromatic modes, each with its own distinctive harmonic hue. From unisons and minor seconds, it rises and expands through the succession of equal-tempered intervals, to major sevenths and, finally, to the perfect clarity of octaves.

“*Clouds* was composed specifically for JoAnn Falletta and the Apollo Chamber Orchestra. I’m deeply grateful to these musicians for their extraordinary sensitivity and grace. *Clouds* is dedicated, with love, to the memory of my father, Thomas Luther Adams, and, with gratitude and respect, to Jasper Johns.”

—*Program Notes by Beth E. Levy*

The Performers

Percussionist **Daniel Kennedy** is a specialist in the music of the twentieth century. He received his M.F.A. degree from the California Institute of the Arts, and his D.M.A. from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Widely recorded, Kennedy was a founding member of the California E.A.R. Unit and the Talujon Percussion Quartet. He has been featured as a percussion soloist for the California Arts Council Touring Program and in performances at the Kennedy Center and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Kennedy is currently Instructor of Percussion and Artistic Director of the Festival of New American Music at California State University, Sacramento. He has been a member of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players since 1993, and is a member of Earplay and the Emyrean Ensemble.

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Artistic Director

Conductor, percussionist, and author **Steven Schick** joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 2011. Born in Iowa and raised in a farming family, Schick has spent the last thirty years championing contemporary music, commissioning and premiering more than one hundred new works by composers as varied as Brian Ferneyhough, David Lang, and Iannis Xenakis.

Recently lauded as a “brilliant” conductor in the New York Times, Schick is Music Director and conductor of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus, the founder and Artistic Director of the percussion group red fish blue fish, and the principal guest conductor of New York’s International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego. He was the percussionist of the Bang on a Can All-Stars of New York City from 1992-2002, and from 2000 to 2004 served as Artistic Director of the Centre International de Percussion de Genève in Geneva, Switzerland.

Schick’s recent publications include a book on solo percussion music, “The Percussionist’s Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams,” published by the University of Rochester Press; his recording of “The Mathematics of Resonant Bodies” by John Luther Adams, released by Cantaloupe Music; and a three-CD set of the complete percussion music of Iannis Xenakis, made in collaboration with red fish blue fish, issued by Mode Records.

The Ensemble

The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players (SFCMP), now in its forty-first 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, SFCMP has won this award more times than any other ensemble.

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.