Tonight’s premiere performance of music by Ronald Bruce Smith’s return to breath was made possible in part by a generous grant from The James Irvine Foundation. We also thank the Clarence E. Heller Charitable Fund for general support of tonight’s concert, and the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies at the University of California Berkeley for providing the ADAT machine.

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Performers

David Bithell, trumpet
Steven D’Amico, contrabass
Scott Bleaken, percussion
Russell Greenberg, percussion

Neal Stulberg, guest conductor

ZEROES AND ONES

EZEQUIEL VIÑAO
The Voices of Silence (1987)

CORT LIPPE
Music for Harp and Tape (1990)
Karen Gottlieb, harp

— INTERMISSION —

JAVIER ALVAREZ
Mambo Vinko (1993)
Hall Goff, trombone

RONALD BRUCE SMITH
return to breath (2000) U.S. Premiere
EZEQUIEL VIÑAO (B. 1960)

Ezequiel Viñao’s work has an imaginative flair that is not surprising given the breadth of his interests and international experiences. Born in Argentina in 1960, Viñao studied piano before becoming interested in composition and receiving private instruction from Jacobo Ficher (once a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov). After attending the Buenos Aires Department of Acoustic Musical Studies, Viñao’s skill at the keyboard drew the attention of American pianist Earl Wild, who served as a mentor to him and helped him gain a grant from the United Nations that allowed him to move to New York. He enrolled at Juilliard, where he studied with György Sandor, Adele Marcus, and Milton Babbitt, and after graduating he was invited to work with Olivier Messiaen at the Festival d’Avignon.

Though some of Viñao’s most recent works have eschewed electronics, much of his music involves computer generated or electronically manipulated sounds, making him one of the many composers of Argentinian descent who have written pioneering electroacoustic works (Michael Rosas Cobjan, Eduardo Cosnier, Mario Davidovsky, Ricardo Mandolini, Horacio Vaggione, and Alejandro Viñao, among others). While still in France, he produced La Noche de las Noches for string quartet and live electronics, which the London Times called “evocative” and “austere theatrical” and which the European Broadcasting Union selected to be aired around the world. In El Simurgh, Book I, The Conference of the Birds (1991) and Book II, The Seven Valleys (1995), solo instruments (piano and violin) interact with computer sounds in ways that expand the possible relationships between performer and machine. Based on a twelfth-century epic poem, this series of works has been praised by audiences in Europe, Japan, and the United States.

In 1992, Viñao fulfilled a Boston Pro Arte Orchestra commission for a work using live electronics and commemorating Columbus’s arrival in the New World. The Boston Herald described the resulting El Sueño de Cristobal as “a hallucinatory vision of the sleeping admiral’s dream voyage marked by skewed dance rhythms and accumulating textures of fevered intensity.” This rhythmic energy colors much of Viñao’s music. This may be what led a reviewer of the first concert devoted solely to Viñao’s compositions to remark that: “there is nothing generic about this highly gifted composer, whose music, whichever way it turns, is always vibrant and alive.”

Recently, Viñao has received awards from the Argentinian Academy of Fine Arts, the International Society for Contemporary Music, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the International Music Council in Paris, an Endowed Fellowship from California’s Djerassi Foundation, and the First Prize at UNESCO’s Latinamerican Rostrum of Composers. In 1995 his Etudes for piano were awarded the Kennedy Center’s prestigious Friedheim Award. He has collaborated with prestigious performing groups including the Radio France and American Composers Orchestras, Speculum Musicæ, Music Mobile, Dinosaur Annex, and many soloists of international distinction. His works have been heard at major venues around the world including New York’s Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and Museum of Modern Art, London’s Almeida Theatre, Vienna’s Musikverein, Tokyo’s Shobi Institute, the Diligentia Hall in The Hague, and the Helskinki Biennale, in addition to Festivals in Aspen, San Antonio, and Bourges (France).

In collaboration with novelist Caleb Carr—author of such best-selling novels as The Alienist and Angel of Darkness—Viñao is currently at work an opera called Merlin, whose subject matter (based on Arthurian legends) is intended to reintroduce mythic and epic plots to the American opera stage. The first part of this large scale work, Viviane of Avalon, was given an unstaged performance at the 1999 Presences festival of contemporary music in Paris. The second scene, revolving around Merlin and Uther Pendragon, is now in preparation for its premiere in May 2002 by the New York City Opera Showcase. Viñao is also working on a chamber concerto for violinist Anne Akiko Meyers and pianist Joseph Kalichstein, who premiered Viñao’s Fantasie (based on the Spanish tune “La Folia”) at the Kennedy Center in 1998.
The advantages of live interaction are clear: "A dynamic relationship between performer, musical material, and the computer can become an important aspect of the man-machine interface for the composer, performer, and listener, in an environment where musical expression is used to control an electronic score. Compositions can be fine-tuned to individual performing characteristics of different musicians, performers and computers can interact more intimately, and performers can readily sense consequences of their performance and their musical interpretation."

Lippe was well prepared for his position at the forefront of electroacoustic composition by contact with some of the most important international figures in musical technology. He studied at the State University of New York at Buffalo where he serves as director of the Lejaren Hiller Computer Music Studios.

In addition to using computers to generate new sounds and to explore algorithmic procedures, Lippe relies on technology to achieve otherwise unattainable extremes in dynamic levels (from loud to soft) or registers (from high to low). In his pieces for solo instrument and tape, he also explores extremely intimate relationships between instrumentalists and electronic sounds. In works such as his Music for Clarinet and ISPW (1992), Music for Flute and Computer (1992), Music for Piano and Computer (1996), and Music for Hi-Hat and Computer (1998), technology enables a performer to accompany him- or herself through the simultaneous pro-

The Voices of Silence (1987)

for tape

The four movements of Voices of Silence, collectively entitled Sinfonia, remains unique in Viñao’s oeuvre as his only work for tape alone. In this, his first concert piece using electronics, he confined himself to materials produced entirely by a computer, using frequency modulation techniques. Despite this self-imposed limitation, Voices of Silence presents a stunning array of sounds, and each movement gives a distinct impression of continuous development.

According to the composer, “Sinfonia is structured in four movements or rather in four different ways of looking at the same phenomenon. The sole source of material is a tala [rhythmic pattern] composed of four cells that yield a theoretical 5/8, 2/8, 3/8, 4/8. The permutations and subdivisions of this rhythmic cycle generate the discourse at the micro and macro levels.” Whether or not listeners can discern the mathematical ratios underlying Viñao’s rhythmic scheme, they can surely appreciate the changes in perspective represented by the work’s four sections. From the patterned pulsation of the first movement to the ringing sonorities of the second, and from the expressive inflections of the third movement’s sliding pitches to the mercurial metric shifts of the finale, these contrasts indeed give Voices of Silence the comprehensive character of a four-movement “symphony.”

CORT LIPPE (B. 1953)

Cort Lippe describes himself simply and succinctly as “a computer musician,” but his works and writings reveal just how many different roles and styles this label can encompass. In an interview last year, he pointed out that “some composers use computers to model or imitate musical instruments... some composers are interested in replacing instrumentalists with machines by modeling human performance. I’m not interested in replacing either instruments or performers.” On the contrary, many of the most exciting moments in Lippe’s work explore real-time interaction between live performers and electronics. As he sees it, the
cessing of live sounds. In Music for Guitar and Tape (1990) and the piece on tonight’s program, Music for Harp and Tape (1990), sounds drawn from the composed instrumental part are transformed and then captured on tape, allowing an intriguing fusion of live and pre-recorded material.

Lippe’s works have received numerous international composition prizes, including Japan’s Irino Prize, first prizes from El Callejon Del Ruido Competition of Mexico, the USA League-ISCM Competition, and the Leonie Rothschild Competition, as well as awards from the Music Today Competition, the Newcomp Competition, Sonaveria International Competition, and Italy’s Luigi Russolo Competition. Music for Harp and Tape won first prize in the 1991 19th Annual Electronic Music Competition of Bourges as well as honorable mentions in the 1991 Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards and the 1993 Prix Ars Electronica of Linz. In 1986, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players performed Lippe’s Tapewalk I and Vosive I.

**Music for Harp and Tape (1990)**

Music for Harp and Tape is Lippe’s third work featuring harp, and it gave him the opportunity to deal with new and sometimes surprising musical gestures. Although it was created with an interactive computer system, the tape part is fixed in advance. It consists entirely of harp sounds taken from the solo part and subjected to the composer’s imaginative reworking through digital processing. The conceptual kinship between the live and recorded sounds is very close. As Lippe notes, “The instrument and tape are equals in the musical dialogue. At times one part may dominate, but in the overall formal structure a duo is implicit.”

The composer has suggested that the work may be heard in four distinct sections (three short and one long). The first section is characterized by registral extremes, the second is marked by aggressive chord repetition and gently descending figures, the third uses muted chords and arpeggios, and the, last longer section involves greater contrast and flexibility in the interaction between harp and tape. One can also hear in the duo a phantasmagoric parade of gestures including a wide variety of percussive sounds and expressive slides that could have been drawn from the performance techniques of Asian zithers or the realistic sound effects of film soundtracks.

Music for Harp and Tape was commissioned by and written for the harpist Masumi Nagasawa, who premiered it at the Ueno Cultural Center, Tokyo in March of 1990. Lippe benefitted from the technical advice of Miller Puckette and from Puckette’s computer program Max. Together, he and Puckette wrote the signal processing and control programs for the 4X real-time digital signal processor. The digital mix of the final tape version was done at IRCAM, with the assistance of Xavier Bordelais.
Mambo Vinko (1993)
for trombone and electroacoustic sounds

The composer recalls: “During my days as a youngster I did quite a lot of traveling around Mexico by asking for rides at motorway entrances. On a certain occasion, I was given a ride on a large timber-carrying truck across the mountain ridge which lies between Puebla and Veracruz. After settling down on my seat and a little later having exhausted the expected small talk, the truck driver went into great detail about his lifelong predilection for Mambo music (which, of course, we heard incessantly on the radio). It was very late at night and I was very tired, so I spent a strange night trying not to fall asleep, yet waking up between wild dreams invaded by the sounds of engine acceleration and the air brakes of the enormous machine, the blaring radio and the overenthusiastic conversation of the driver....

“It is on the basis of that trip that I drew the psychological frame for Mambo Vinko. The piece is a sort of construction, or rather a deconstruction of this experience, organized as a personal ‘road movie,’ complete with quotes from the different sonic characters who inhabited my dreams, including the unmistakable grunts of...
Ronald Bruce Smith is well known in the Bay Area both through his association with the University of California, Berkeley and the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies [CNMAT] and through such recent performances as the 2001 Berkeley Symphony Orchestra premiere of Constellation, for orchestra and live electronics. Smith studied at the University of Toronto and at McGill University before arriving at U. C. Berkeley, where he worked with Richard Felciano and David Wessel and received his doctorate in 1992. He has since spent time at IRCAM in Paris studying with Tristan Murail, and as resident artist at the Banff Centre School of the Arts and at Ontario’s Festival of the Sound. Before becoming a composer associate and visiting scholar at CNMAT, Smith taught at Stanford University and the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.

Many of Smith’s works, including the piece on tonight’s program, 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). For example, his *Kyrie Eleison* (1992) combines soprano soloist, orchestra, and live electronics in “a quiet plea for mercy as well as a static prayer for spiritual reflection” intended as a memorial to thirteen students murdered in December 1989 at the University of Montreal. In *Five Meditations* (1996-97), based on research begun at IRCAM and realized at CNMAT, Smith manipulates materials drawn from Pakistani vocal music and the Indonesian gamelan (percussion orchestra). His interest in timbral nuances has taken many and diverse forms. In works like *Still/Life for flute and percussion* (1993), timbral variety comes from dramatic articulations and subtle performance techniques. In his chamber work *Flux* (1993), performed by San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1995, he relies on mathematical explorations of tone color based on the imaginative manipulation of harmonic spectra from the overtone series.

Mambo *Vinko* reflects both the sounds and surreal quality of Alvarez’s nighttime journey, as the trombone soloist offers his own gently jazzy commentary against the electroacoustic “background” sounds simulating the truck, the radio and the noises of the street. The piece was commissioned by the Groupe de Rêcherches Musicales, for Vinko Globokar, who gave the premiere in Paris in 1993.

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the 50s great king of mambo music, Dámaso Perez Prado.”

*Mambo Vinko* reflects both the sounds and surreal quality of Alvarez’s nighttime journey, as the trombone soloist offers his own gently jazzy commentary against the electroacoustic “background” sounds simulating the truck, the radio and the noises of the street. The piece was commissioned by the Groupe de Rêcherches Musicales, for Vinko Globokar, who gave the premiere in Paris in 1993.
of the bells from Sather Tower on the UC Berkeley campus. It was around that same time that I received that heartbreaking news that Michael J. Baker had been diagnosed with leukemia. The tone of the piece then changed. At that point I wanted to write a meditation and a prayer while hoping that Michael would make it through his illness. He did not and he later died on September 16, 2000 in Toronto. return to breath is dedicated to the memory of Michael J. Baker.”

ArrayMusic commissioned return to breath with assistance from the Canada Council for the Arts. They premiered the work in Toronto in February 2000.

—Program notes by Beth Levy

Smith has received numerous awards for his compositions, including the International String Quartet Composition Competition in Washington D.C. and the Robert Fleming Prize of the Canada Council. His works have been commissioned and/or performed by such ensembles as the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, Aitken-Tureski Duo, the California EAR Unit, Cikada, the Del Sol String Quartet, EARPLAY, the Evergreen Club Gamelan, Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, the Pierrrot Ensemble, Speculum Musicæ, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, and Vancouver New Music. His music has also been featured at festivals in Europe, the Americas, and Australia. 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.

return to breath (2000)

for trumpet, two percussionists, contrabass, and four channel tape

The composer writes: “In 1987, I was selected to be a resident young composer with the ArrayMusic Ensemble of Toronto. During that time, I became very good friends with several members of the ensemble and its former conductor and artistic director, Michael J. Baker. In the years following the residency, Michael commissioned three more pieces from me for ArrayMusic.

“For years, I’ve always thought of the ArrayMusic Ensemble as a ‘70’s’ band. They gave their first concerts in 1972 and are well known, contrary to what their name might imply, for their fine performances of minimal and post-minimalist music. (Among the many composers that they’ve collaborated with are Morton Feldman, Claude Vivier, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, and Walter Zimmermann.)

“When the commission for ‘return to breath’ arrived, I planned to write something of a 70’s piece for them. That is, a piece that was based on linear processes, incorporated certain non-Western elements and worked with a variety of spectra. I began the hard work on the piece in the fall of 1999 using for sound sources for the tape part Tibetan prayer bowls, gongs from a Javanese Gamelan and one
**Guest Conductor**

Hailed by the Los Angeles Times as “...a shining example of podium authority and musical enlightenment,” American conductor **Neal Stulberg** garners consistent international acclaim for performances of clarity, insight, and conviction. A native of Detroit and a graduate of Harvard College, the University of Michigan and the Juilliard School, he studied conducting with Franco Ferrara at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome. In North America, Stulberg has led the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Atlanta, Houston, Milwaukee, National, New World, Pacific, Saint Louis, San Francisco, and Vancouver Symphonies, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, among others. He is a recipient of the Seaver/National Endowment for the Arts Conductors Award, America’s most coveted conducting prize, and has served as Assistant Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Carlo Maria Giulini and as Music Director of the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra.

Stulberg’s European career was launched in September 1997 when he stepped in on short notice to conduct the Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in a program of Bartók and Kodaly. He was immediately re-engaged by that orchestra to conduct on the prestigious VARA series in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and has since appeared frequently in Holland. In September 2000 he made his Scandinavian debut with the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, and in summer 2001 conducted the San Francisco Ballet in London, Santander, and Barcelona. A frequent guest conductor in Asia, Israel, and Russia, Stulberg has worked with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Seoul Philharmonic, Korea Philharmonic (KBS), Haifa Symphony Orchestra, Israel Sinfonietta, St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, and the Moscow Chamber Orchestra.

Stulberg has given premieres of works by Steve Reich, Dmitri Smirnov, Joan Tower, Peter Schat, and Peter van Onna, led the period-instrument Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in a festival of Mozart orchestral and operatic works, and has brought to life sever-

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**Featured Performers**

**Hall Goff**, trombone, received his B.A. from Oberlin College and M.M. from the Yale University School of Music, where his principal teacher was John Swallow. Other teachers include Tom Cramer, Douglas Edelman, Tyrone Brenninger, and Ned Meredith. Goff has been a member of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra since 1977, and a member of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players since 1981. In addition, he has performed locally with such ensembles as the San Francisco Symphony and San Francisco Opera, nationally with the Eastern Brass Quintet, the Wall Street Quintet, and the New York City Ballet, and internationally at the Spoleto Festival and the Macerata Opera of Italy. Raising his bell in the popular realm, he has performed with the likes of Frank Zappa, Ella Fitzgerald, Bob Hope, Nelson Riddle, Diane Carroll, Vic Damone, and Manhattan Transfer. Recordings include music by Earle Brown and Morton Feldman with the Contemporary Music Players, Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet and Paul Chihara’s The Tempest with the San Francisco Ballet, and occasional recordings for film and television.

**Karen Gottlieb** performs regularly as second harpist with the San Francisco Symphony and with other Bay Area ensembles, including the California Symphony, San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and the Berkeley Symphony. She is principal harpist with the prestigious Cabrillo Music Festival. In 1990 she toured with the San Francisco Symphony on their European Festival Concert Tour and in 1983, she was a featured soloist with the San Francisco Boys Chorus on their concert tour of Australia and New Zealand. She has also performed with many Broadway shows and has accompanied contemporary singers Tony Bennett, Ann-Margaret, Neil Sedaka, Anthony Newley, Steve Lawrence, and Edie Gourne. Gottlieb received her B.A. with honors from the University of Washington, and her M.M. in harp, with honors, at the Cleveland Institute of Music. She joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1990.
al silent movies from the early 1900s, including the Russian classic
New Babylon, Shostakovich’s first film score. In the fall of 2001,
he conducted the Netherlands premiere of Philip Glass’ opera
Akhnaten at the Rotterdam Festival and led Thomas Adès’s Powder
Her Face with Long Beach Opera.

The Ensemble

The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, now in its
thirty-first year, is a leader among ensembles in the United
States dedicated to contemporary chamber music. A seven-
time winner of the prestigious national ASCAP/Chamber Music
America Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary
Music, SFCMP has performed over 940 new works, including 39
U.S. and 106 world premieres, and has brought sixty-one new
pieces into the repertoire through its active commissioning efforts.
The instrumentalists who make up the Players are recognized virtu-
osi in new music performance. Each season the ensemble performs
a six-concert series at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. SFCMP
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 seven albums of its own and contributed recordings to
eight others. Its innovative education programs for students at San
Francisco’s School of the Arts and Lowell High School include per-
formance/presentations and master classes.

The Staff

Executive Director Adam Frey obtained his B.A. in Music
from Harvard University, and his M.B.A. from the University
of California, Berkeley, with emphasis on marketing and
planning. He joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players
in 1991 after six years with Sherman, Clay Co., then the nation’s
largest keyboard instrument retailer, where he was Vice President in
charge of Merchandising. He served on the Board of Governors of
the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco from 1991 to 1997, and
chaired the Institute’s Development Committee. Mr. Frey is also a
writer; his work has been published in The Mississippi Review.

Business Manager Elaine Ng received her B.A. in Music from
the University of California, Davis and her M.B.A. and
M.A. in Arts Administration from Southern Methodist
University in Dallas, TX. Along the way, she has worked with the
Empyrean Ensemble, the Dallas Opera, the Dallas Symphony, and,
most recently, the Studio Arts Centers International in Florence,
Italy.

Michele Fromson, Associate Director, holds a Ph.D. in
music history and theory from the University of
Pennsylvania and a certificate degree from U.S.F. in non-
profit management. As a music historian, she has published many
academic articles on Renaissance sacred music and has received
four fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities.
As a non-profit manager she led the new music ensemble
EARPLAY as its executive director for five years and has also done
management consulting for the Empyrean Ensemble, Berkeley
Opera, and Left Coast Chamber Ensemble.
THE PLAYERS

Roy Malan (1976), violin I
Susan Freier (1993), violin II
Nancy Ellis (1975), viola
Stephen Harrison (1982), cello
Steven D’Amico (1979), contrabass
Tod Brody (2001), flute
William Wohlmacher (1995), clarinet
Rufus Olivier (1991), bassoon
Lawrence Ragent (1981), French horn

Charles Metzger (1976), trumpet
Hall Goff (1979), trombone
Peter Wahrhaftig (1989), tuba
Karen Gottlieb (1990), harp
Paul Binkley (1981), guitar
Julie Steinberg (1989), piano
Thomas Schultz (1994), piano
William Winant (1998), percussion I
Dan Kennedy (1993), percussion II

*Dates indicate year of joining

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