

San Francisco Contemporary Music Players

Monday, January 28, 2002 at 8 pm

Center for the Arts Theater

ECHOES AND REVERIES

Tonight's premiere performances of music by Edwin Dugger and Gordon Mumma are made possible in part by a grant from The James Irvine Foundation.

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Performers

Tod Brody, flute
Blair Tindall, oboe
William Wohlmacher, clarinet
Rufus Olivier, bassoon
Lawrence Ragent, French horn
Timothy Dent, percussion
Julie Steinberg, piano
Thomas Schultz, harmonium
Roy Malan, violin (Schoenberg)
Susan Freier, violin (Dugger, Schoenberg)
Nancy Ellis, viola
Stephen Harrison, cello
Steven D'Amico, contrabass

Jean-Louis LeRoux, conductor

EDWIN DUGGER

A Summer's Reverie (1999) World Premiere

I. Espresso
II. Frenetico
III. Largo e espressivo

LUIGI NONO

...sofferte onde serene... (1976)

Thomas Schultz, piano

— INTERMISSION —

GORDON MUMMA

Tile, in memoriam William Banovetz (2001) World Premiere

Blair Tindall, oboe
Julie Steinberg, piano

PIERRE BOULEZ

Anthèmes I (1992)

Roy Malan, violin

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

*Five Pieces for Orchestra, op.16 (1909),
arranged for chamber orchestra by Felix Greissle (1925)*

I. Vorgefühle (Premonitions)
II. Vergangenes (Reminiscences)
III. Farben (Colors): Sommermorgen am See (Summer morning on the water)
IV. Peripetie (Peripeteia)
V. Das obligate Rezitativ (The Unending Melody)

EDWIN DUGGER (B. 1940)

Born and raised in Missouri, Edwin Dugger has been an influential presence on the Bay Area's new music scene since the late sixties. From 1960-61 he studied at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria before returning to complete his undergraduate degree with Richard Hoffmann at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music. After working with Roger Sessions, Milton Babbitt, and Earl Kim at Princeton University, he joined the faculty at Oberlin. In 1967, he began his more than thirty-year tenure at the University of California, Berkeley, where he teaches composition and analysis. In 1970 he was a co-founder (with Olly Wilson and Richard Felciano) of the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players.

Equally at home in electronic and acoustic media, Dugger has produced works for varied ensembles. In his *Music for Synthesizer and Six Instruments* (1966) and the dramatic *In Opera's Shadow* (1983), he explores changing relationships between instruments and electronics. His Septet for piano, winds, and strings (1988) employs canons and symmetries on many levels, in tribute to the compositional preferences of his teacher, Earl Kim. Like many of Dugger's twelve-tone pieces, this one involves a carefully constructed tone row (built in this case from diminished seventh and augmented chords) but allows sounding unisons and octaves to lend his serialism a certain kind of consonance. In May 1998, the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies (CNMAT) presented a concert devoted to his works using electronics, featuring *A Frenzy of Frightened Footnotes* (1997), *Crazy Eights* for 8-channel computer-generated sounds (1998), and *3 Western Gardens, 3 Western Seascapes, 3 Western Landscapes* for piano and computer-generated sound (1997). Last spring, he participated in a multi-media collaborative project, contributing *The Silence of Shattered Silhouettes* to Christopher Dolder's dance *Fractal*.

Dugger's honors and awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Naumberg Award, and an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Among the many groups who have performed his

music are the Gulbekian Foundation (Lisbon), the Milwaukee Art Center, Portland Summer Concerts, the Manhattan School of Music, the Parnassus Ensemble, the New York Philharmonic, the Group for Contemporary Music, the Chicago Symphony Chamber Music Series, and Sacramento 20th Century Music Festival. Dugger has received commissions from the Boston Symphony, the Fromm Foundation, the Koussevitzky Foundation in the Library of Congress, Columbia University, and Empyrean Ensemble, in addition to the San Francisco Contemporary Players, who premiered his *Variations and Adagio* in January 1980. More recently, EARPLAY premiered a quartet that Dugger wrote in honor of Richard Hoffmann's 75th birthday, *On Spring's Eve* (2000), which Jules Langert has called "attractive," "distinctive," and "rewarding" (*San Francisco Classical Voice*).

***A Summer's Reverie* (1999)**

for flute, clarinet, percussion, violin, viola, and cello

The composer writes: "A *Summer's Reverie* was composed in the summer of 1999. I had just completed an orchestra work, *With Remembrances...*, a string quartet, and a set of piano pieces, *Fragments from Another Time*. All of these works are dedicated to various family members. I felt that I needed the summer for musical reflection and for a work "of my own" without the hindrance of a specific dedication. Hence *A Summer's Reverie*, a contemplative work in three movements; the first, a lyrical movement, the second, a short, rapid but brief breath of air, and the third, an introspective movement."

Tonight's world premiere performance of A Summer's Reverie will be the one hundredth world premiere presented by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

LUIGI NONO (1924-1990)

“It takes courage and power to recognize one’s own time and to decide in its favor. It is much easier to stick one’s head in the sand: ‘We’re free since we have no choice; we’re free since we are dead; free as a rock’.” In his polemical essay “Historical Presence in Music Today” Luigi Nono exhorted his fellow composers to examine contemporary social issues and engage with them both creatively and ethically. The primary target of his 1959 critique was John Cage, whose recent visit to Darmstadt had excited the New Music community, but to a lesser extent he was also expressing disappointment in the isolated abstraction of Milton Babbitt’s or Pierre Boulez’s works of the early 1950s. Nono felt that Cage’s depersonalizing chance procedures were morally flawed—an abdication of the artist’s responsibility to make courageous decisions. When it came to serialism, Nono had no quarrel with the technique; he was as devoted to its rigorous structuring as any of his contemporaries. Instead, he reacted against the tendency some of his colleagues had to detach art from politics.

Nono’s attraction to serialism stemmed from his early training in Venice with Gian Francesco Malipiero (who was intrigued by the Second Viennese School), from shared studies with his friend Bruno Maderna, and especially from his association with the older Italian avant-garde figure Luigi Dallapiccola. Nono’s ties to Schoenberg were multifaceted—his first piece after arriving to study in Darmstadt was a set of canonic variations on a Schoenbergian theme, and in 1955 he married the composer’s daughter Nuria. From the very beginning of his career, however, Nono’s commitment to political music set him apart. He became a member of the Communist party in 1952, and his best known early work, *Il canto sospeso* (1955-56) relied on the words of condemned political prisoners. In 1961, his musical theater piece *Intolleranza 1960* created a scandal in Venice because of its controversial themes: racism and oppression, fascism and violence.

For Nono political engagement did not necessarily mean writing

popular or “accessible” music. Rather, he believed that a composer must make use of all available resources to further his ideals. As musicologist Gianmario Borio points out, “Fired by the conviction that all artistic activity must be motivated by ethical and political considerations, Nono considered that, for a piece to make an impact on reality, the composer must be familiar with the most advanced musical techniques of his age. The compositions in which Nono dealt explicitly with political issues thus became those in which he experimented the most with electronic technology.” Working at the RAI Studio in Milan and elsewhere, he produced such works as *Musica-manifesto* (1968) and *Al gran sole carico d’amore* (1972-74), which deals with women’s liberation in a variety of historical contexts. As Borio points out, the writers Nono chose to set during the sixties and seventies make plain his sympathies: Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, Bertold Brecht, and Malcolm X, among others.

Beginning in the later seventies, Nono’s writing grew more private and less overtly political. In fact, according to music writer Doris Döpke the work we will hear tonight, *...sofferte onde serene...*, marks a turning point toward the restraint and abstraction that characterizes such works as his string quartet *Fragmente-Stille, an Diotima* (1979-80). While his musical language became more enigmatic, he retained his devotion to musical theater and expanded his interest in music technologies to include live-electronics. As Borio observes: “Nono’s humanistic outlook was formed out of an insatiable curiosity for the viewpoints and methods of other artistic genres (theatre, literature, painting, architecture and cinema) and a strong interest in all human forms of communication (from the workplace to politics, from philosophical thought to the mythical and religious sphere): he believed that art is never exhausted in its technical capacity, that it reflects the totality of human experience.”

...sofferte onde serene... (1976)

(...serene waves endured...)

for piano and two-channel magnetic tape

The “serene waves” of Nono’s title have a variety of meanings. Perhaps most obviously, they refer to sound waves, which in this

piece emanate both from the piano and from a collection of speakers. While some of the composer's earlier electronic music suggests a conflict between the human and the mechanical, this one mingles their efforts so completely that it is often hard to tell which sounds are live and which are recorded. Inspired by the different kinds of articulation and piano pedaling used by his friend Maurizio Pollini, he created a tape that reflects, enhances, or exaggerates Pollini's own sounds, creating what he called "two acoustic planes, which often blend together, sometimes canceling out the mechanical extra-neousness of the tape."

For some listeners, the dynamic ebb and flow of the work may conjure images of water. Others may respond to its pervasive bell-like timbres which, the composer reveals, were crucial to his own conception of the work: "In my house on the Giudecca in Venice, the sound of various bells rung in different ways and with different meanings reach our ears continuously, day and night, through the fog or in the sunshine. They are indications of life on the lagoon, on the sea. Calls to work and meditation, warnings. And life continues there in the painful and calm necessity of the 'equilibrium of the profound interior,' as Kafka says."

As Nono's words suggest, the bells both disrupt and ensure an emotional balance that had personal meaning for the composer. In his own program note for the piece, he spoke cryptically of "a harsh wind of death" which "swept 'the infinite smile of the waves' in my family and in Pollini's"—a rather oblique reference to recent funerals of Nono's parents and one of Pollini's children. The diverse messages of the bells (commemorating, summoning to action, marking the passage of time) mirror the many meanings of the waves in ways that are deliberately ambiguous. Even the unusual word order of the title causes semantic uncertainty, by placing the noun "waves" between the two adjectives "suffered/sorrowful" and "serene." Is it the serene waves that suffer and are sorrowful? Or does some subjective presence endure the breaking of the waves (the tolling of the bells, the passage of time)? Having raised such questions, Nono preferred to multiply the possible responses rather than offering unequivocal answers. In conclusion, he called the music's moments and gestures "not 'episodes' which are successive-

ly exhausted, but 'memories' and 'presences' that are superimposed on those memories and presences that are themselves mingled with the 'serene waves'."

GORDON MUMMA (B. 1935)

“The special talent of Gordon Mumma is his ability to rethink.” So wrote David Revill in assessing a composer whose career has mirrored the changes in music technology that have marked the twentieth century—from the recording and tape-splicing experiments of his college days to his later efforts in electronically generated, electro-acoustic, and computer music. Born in Massachusetts, Mumma received his early training in horn and piano in the Midwest. His compositional activities took flight while he was an English major at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, the city that remained his creative home during the early sixties. Here, he and Robert Ashley founded the Cooperative Studio for Electronic Music (1958-66) and helped organize the groundbreaking ONCE Festivals of Contemporary Music (1960-68).

Combining innovation and collaboration is fundamental to Mumma's philosophy. Few artists have such strong and multifaceted ties to America's experimental music traditions, and listing just a few of the participants in Mumma's multimedia and collaborative projects yields an impressive catalog. Between 1966 and 1974 he joined John Cage and David Tudor in their work for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Also beginning in 1966, he performed with Ashley, David Behrman, and Alvin Lucier in the Sonic Arts Union, which pioneered live-electronic music. His joint efforts in composition and performance have involved such diverse artists as Tandy Beal, Anthony Braxton, Chris Brown, Marcel Duchamp, Fred Frith, Lou Harrison, Toshi Ichihyanagi, Jasper Johns, Bobby McFerrin, Pauline Oliveros, Tom Robbins, Frederic Rzewski, Olly Wilson, William Winant, and Christian Wolff.

Even within this distinguished circle, Mumma has been an innovator, exploring the relationships between music, performers, and machines and designing electronic circuits to meet his own sonic

needs. One of his best-known engineering feats was accomplished (with Tudor) in his early design for integrating electronic music and live performance at EXPO-70 (Osaka, Japan); he was also one of the first to create a “wearable interface” allowing dancers’ body movements to create the sounds accompanying them. Throughout his career, Mumma’s enthusiasm and knowledge have inspired those around him. David Behrman recalls, “He wrote me a series of letters in 1964 that were like a basic course in electronic music before there were any books on the subject.”

Some of Mumma’s works employ aleatory and improvisational elements. As Revill has noted, this fascination with artistic freedom complements (and in many cases supersedes) electronic music’s tendency to fix sounds in a permanent form. For example, *Gestures II* (1958-62) requires two pianists to coordinate their selection of the piece’s modular phrases according to the changing dynamics of their interaction while performing. His 1973 work *Cybersonic Cantilevers* extends this interaction to include audience members, who were invited to bring in their own sounds for creative manipulation.

Mumma has taught and lectured around the world, but his primary teaching experiences have been in California. From 1975 until 1994 he was on the faculty at U. C. Santa Cruz. He also was a Visiting Professor at U. C. San Diego (1985, 1987), and at Mills College where he held the positions of Darius Milhaud Professor (1981), Distinguished Visiting Composer (1989), and Jean Macduff Vaux Composer-in-Residence (1999). Mumma’s commissions include pieces for Radio Bremen (Germany), the Biennale di Venezia, the New York State Arts Council, Oberlin College, the San Francisco Conservatory, the Oregon Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts, in addition to the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. He has written extensively on music technologies and performance art, with published essays on John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Alvin Lucier, Roger Reynolds, and Charles Ives. Some of his solo piano music is being published by C. F. Peters. In 2000, Mumma received the prestigious biennial John Cage award from the Foundation for the Contemporary Performance Arts.

Tile, in Memoriam William Banovetz (2001)

for oboe (or others) with keyboard

The composer writes: “I had the privilege of working with William Banovetz on several occasions. The first was in 1992 with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players (in John Cage’s *Music for Seventeen*, and its subsequent and historically important CD recording by Newport Classics). The last occasion was in the spring of 2000, when he performed in a chamber music composition at Mills College—a retrospective concert of my own music. He was always elegant in the performances. But my respect and admiration for his musical and personal character developed most deeply in the rehearsals, where I experienced his magnificent balance between being a soloist and an ensemble-member.

“When I learned of his untimely death, in early 2001, my day stopped. My grief process began immediately, and I composed the brief work *Tile (in memoriam William Banovetz)*. Though this *Tile* is for “Oboe and keyboard accompaniment,” it could be a different solo instrument, and the “keyboard” part could be other than piano. The *Tile* was completed within a day, though my grief—and that of so many others—continued.”

PIERRE BOULEZ (B. 1925)

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

Born the son of an industrial engineer, Boulez began playing piano at the age of six and became the soprano soloist in a Catholic semi-nary choir at thirteen. Despite his father's fierce objections, he finally left for Paris and studies at the Conservatoire in 1942. Enrolling in an advanced harmony course with the famed composer Olivier Messiaen in 1944, the youth at first excelled, but over time became increasingly disdainful of traditional harmony. "He became angry with the whole world," Messiaen later recalled. "He thought everything was wrong with music."

Receiving his diploma in 1945—and still musically restless—Boulez commenced lessons with composer René Leibowitz, who introduced him to the twelve-tone music of Arnold Schoenberg. This was the revelation he had been seeking: "Here was a music of our time, a language with unlimited possibilities. No other language was possible." He threw himself into this new creative arena with such passion and virtuosity that Leibowitz was hard pressed to keep him "within the rules" of strict Schoenbergian dodecaphony. Boulez, for his part, rejected all such restrictions, freely inventing new principals of intervallic construction to suit his needs. Works that emerged during this period—including the First Piano Sonata (1946)—are meticulously organized in terms of pitch and other elements, but are also highly dramatic, expressive, full of dark violence and stark contrast.

In 1949, American composer John Cage met Boulez in Paris. Mutually fascinated by the intensely forward-looking nature of one another's work, they commenced a lengthy correspondence (now published) in which they debated many of their nascent musical ideas. This friendship ended on a sour note three years later when Cage took umbrage at Boulez's mounting criticism of his use of chance operations in music. Though this rift never fully healed—indeed it soon expanded well beyond the scope of these two individuals—significant traces of Cage's influence would ultimately find manifestation in Boulez's work.

In 1952, just a few months after Schoenberg's death, Boulez created a scandalous sensation by publishing an article in the English music journal *Score* with the shocking title, "SCHOENBERG IS DEAD."

Therein, he savagely attacked the late composer for having set in motion the serialist revolution, only to then hinder it with "a warped romantico-classicism"—to wit, an excessive reliance on formal structures borrowed from tradition rather than arising from inherent characteristics of the tone-rows themselves. He urged composers to follow in the purer, more "logical" serialist footsteps of Schoenberg's student, Anton Webern (who had died in 1948), a statement which quickly elevated Webern from a position of near total obscurity to that of hero and role model for the ascendant serialist movement. In another article titled "Eventually..." Boulez proclaimed, "Any musician who has not felt...the necessity of the dodecaphonic language is *useless*. For everything he writes will fall short of the imperatives of his time."

He followed up these manifestos within the year with *Structures* (1952) for two pianos, a work of near-obsessive control and complexity in which serialist principles lie at the heart of pitch, rhythm, duration, intensity, and mode of attack. Technically, this score achieved nearly everything prescribed in his article, but soon Boulez had shifted his attention toward new approaches that were no less complex, but far more intuitive. He forged his first undisputed masterpiece, *Le Marteau sans Maître* (The Hammer without a Master, 1954, revised 1957), which Igor Stravinsky (who himself had suffered repeated critical attacks from Boulez) called "the only really important work of this new age of search." A more radical departure from total serialism came with the Third Piano Sonata (1957), which incorporates elements of chance—though within rigorously defined and controlled limits. Inspired by the fluid structures of Stéphane Mallarmé's poetry, he created his *Improvisations sur Mallarmé* (1958), which were later reorchestrated as the second and third movements of the monumental *Pli selon pli* (Fold upon Fold, 1961) for soprano and orchestra.

The concept of reworking the same piece several times, of letting it speak in varied contexts, persists in Boulez's work from this point on, as does that of issuing fully performable scores as "works in progress." The revision process has been especially fascinating to watch in relation to developments in electronic media such as those created at the Institut de Recherche et de Coordination

Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM) in Paris, a computer music center which Boulez was instrumental in forming and where he served as director from 1978 until 1992. Like *...explosante-fixe...* (first version with electronics, 1973) and *Repons* (1984), the work we will hear tonight, *Anthèmes I* (1992) was also the springboard for a later version, *Anthèmes II* (1997), in which the solo violin part is electronically enhanced.

Anthèmes I (1992)

for solo violin

Anthèmes began as a memorial miniature, with a theme derived from the name of its dedicatee, Alfred Schlee of Universal Edition. In its present form, the work was Boulez's response to a commission from the Yehudi Menuhin Violin Competition in Paris. Perhaps as a result, the piece is replete with all manner of violinistic techniques—pizzicato, harmonics, fioritura, and ornamental flourishes. As Jonathan Goldman has observed, the contrast and succession of these diverse techniques bear a recognizable if somewhat fractured relationship to other violin showpieces in that different sections of the piece display a particular skill or combination of skills. Frequent contrasts in dynamics, register, gesture, tempo, and articulation make the work technically demanding. But virtuosity is also key to the music's expressive aims, according to musicologist Robert Adlington: "The sense of strain...effectively adds a gloss of intense, expressive lyricism to the merely functional duty of reeling off the notes. Pitches literally bend up or downwards towards their neighbours, pulling against their consigned harmonic role, yearning for melodic status."

According to the composer, the title involves a "play on words": "Although the word 'anthème' is meaningless in French, I use it in this piece to refer both to hymns and to themes. It is a hymn in that there is a succession of verses and paragraphs which are constructed as hymns, that is as a kind of refrain." Although Boulez allows us to interpret the work as a string of successive sections, it is also possible to divide the whole piece into large halves (the first in five short sections; the second resembling an introduction and a longer, more rhapsodic conclusion). Selecting from what he has called

"reservoirs" of pitches (often in fixed registers) and rhythmic values using procedures that are carefully determined but not strictly serial, Boulez has created a work that hovers between dramatic clarity and inscrutable complexity.

There are numerous candidates for Boulez's "refrain"—some quite abstract and others readily audible. First is the pitch D, present in the violinist's first trill and final sustained note, and at many of the structural turning points in between. Second, is the number seven, which one can hear in the work's seven sections, frequent septuplet figuration, and its use of a seven-note series of pitches. Third, the violinist's translucent harmonics represent an audible point of return. Their high register and hollow timbre separate the sections of the piece in a way that Boulez has compared to the annunciatory letters opening paragraphs of sacred text (like those used in the biblical *Lamentations* of Jeremiah).

Finally, the manifold gestures of the piece are made to be recognizable when they return—a communicative departure from the extreme abstraction of the composer's early years. He observes: "In my youth, I thought that music could be *athematic*, completely devoid of themes. In the end, however, I am now convinced that music must be based on recognizable musical objects." In addition to the signpost harmonics, these "musical objects" could include the brusque trills and ricochet bowing (usually on the pitch D) of the opening bars, the dancing pizzicati of the second section, or any number of other distinctive gestures each of which recurs in the final section. Boulez continues, "This piece is replete with such entities, which can be identified very easily. What is less easily identifiable is the *order* in which they occur, or rather the *disorder* in which they occur. We recognize a specific event, but we do not know when it will occur; we recognize them *after the fact*. This is what interests me—to create an effect of simultaneous surprise and recognition."

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG (1874-1951)

Just over fifty years after his death (and just under fifty years since Boulez proclaimed his artistic demise), Arnold Schoenberg is alive and well in many of today's concert halls. This circumstance might have surprised him, given his frustrating and often embattled career. On the other hand, Schoenberg would certainly have appreciated the idea that he was writing music that only future generations could understand.

Considering that he would become one of the truly extraordinary figures in twentieth-century music, Schoenberg's beginnings were quite modest. He was born in Vienna to a lower middle-class Jewish family that was not especially inclined toward music; his compositional training came primarily from a few lessons and a lasting friendship with composer Alexander von Zemlinsky, who had spent three years at the Conservatory. Nonetheless, by his mid-twenties, Schoenberg had converted to Protestantism and had developed a circle of artistic friends. His engagement with the music of Wagner, Brahms, and Mahler led him to compose some sizeable works—the lush string sextet *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured Night) of 1899 and the brilliant dramatic cantata *Gurrelieder* (1901-03, orchestrated 1910-11). Refining his tonal but intensely chromatic style with the First String Quartet (1905) and Chamber Symphony of 1907, Schoenberg retained the expressive gestures and sense of psychological development typical of German romanticism.

When combined with the composer's increasingly dissonant writing, however, even such strong vestiges of nineteenth-century idioms were not enough to ensure success with Viennese audiences. Almost all of Schoenberg's early performances took place under the auspices of elite musical societies or among groups of like-minded friends. By 1904, he had also acquired such prominent and devoted pupils as Anton von Webern and Alban Berg. Eventually they helped him codify the practice of concert-giving in isolation by founding the Society for Private Musical Performances in Vienna in 1918. Embracing their social alienation as a virtue, they attempted to shield new music from the "corrupting influence" of publicity,

allowing it to evolve independently of audience approval or disapproval.

For many observers, one of the most important steps in this artistic "evolution" had occurred around 1908, when Schoenberg made what has often been called a "break" with tonality—an intensification of chromatic activity and harmonic dissonance such that the sense of a tonal center is abandoned or obscured. The composer preferred to call the works of this period "pantonal" rather than the more familiar "atonal," but whatever the terminology, the aesthetic shift it describes unleashed an enormous creative outpouring from Schoenberg in 1909, including the Piano Pieces, op. 11, the song cycle *The Book of the Hanging Gardens*, and the Five Orchestral Pieces, op. 16. Many critics have linked the emotional intensity of these pieces to the intellectual climate of early twentieth-century Vienna—home to both Freudian psychoanalysis and expressionist art. Schoenberg contributed to these explorations of the human subconscious not only through music but also through painting—he was a confidant of Kokoschka and Kandinsky—and his tortured self-portraits complement such scores as *Erwartung* (also of 1909) by reflecting the changeable and often frightening world of the psyche. Schoenberg never completely abandoned his commitment to psychological depth. But he quickly found ways of detaching himself from the audible anxiety of his earlier expressionist work. One manifestation of this can be heard already in the ironic tone of his internationally acknowledged masterpiece *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), which masks the nightmare images of its text in intricate canons, melodramatic narration, and oblique parody of other musical styles.

The chaos of World War I disrupted music making all over Europe. Concerts were less frequent, many of Schoenberg's students were drafted, and he himself attempted to join the reserves. His major effort of this period, the oratorio *Die Jakobsleiter*, remained unfinished. Although practical matters certainly played their part in the dwindling of Schoenberg's output, he was also coming to terms with the problems of atonal writing. With so little left to convention, each moment of each piece required a staggering amount of decision making about every musical parameter—pitch, rhythm, form, and so forth. Surely this was one of the factors leading

Schoenberg to develop the technique that became so closely associated with his name: twelve-tone composition, in which melodic (and sometimes harmonic) material is generated from the rigorous ordering and reordering of a series or row containing all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale. Claiming to have brought about the “emancipation of dissonance,” Schoenberg himself was freed from his relative artistic impasse. Between 1920 and around 1923, he explored the myriad technical and expressive subtleties of his radical system in works that used baroque and classical forms, such as the op. 23 Piano Pieces, *the Serenade*, and the Suite for Piano, op. 25. The varied characters of his large-scale serial works—the *Variations for Orchestra* (1926-28) and the Third String Quartet (1927), *Moses und Aron* (1932), the Violin Concerto and the Fourth String Quartet (1935-36)—illustrate the stylistic flexibility and structural rigor of serial composition that has held such appeal for later composers, beginning with Schoenberg’s students, Webern and Berg, and continuing with such powerfully diverse exponents as Boulez, Babbitt, and Nono.

Doubly persecuted as a modernist and a Jew after Hitler’s rise to power, Schoenberg fled (via France) to the United States in 1934. Having reconverted to Judaism, he eventually settled in Los Angeles and soon took up a teaching position at U. C. L. A. where his influence extended to such diverse students as John Cage, Lou Harrison, Earl Kim, Leon Kirchner, Oscar Levant, David Raksin, and Leonard Stein. Though Schoenberg’s years of American exile were not entirely happy ones, they were creatively rich and spiritually complex. Works such as *Kol nidre* (1938), the *Ode to Napoleon* and the Piano Concerto (1942), and *A Survivor from Warsaw* (1947) show that Schoenberg now felt free to use twelve-tone techniques alongside more conventionally atonal or even tonal writing. They also document his departure from abstraction to convey political and religious messages.

Though he was hardly the first to do so, Schoenberg still attracts critiques for opening a gap between what one can discover analytically about a piece and what one can hear on its surface, for purchasing compositional freedom at the price of artistic intelligibility. By now, such charges have as much to do with subsequent com-

posers as with Schoenberg himself, and reflect the polarized atmosphere of mid-century composition, which often placed the followers of Schoenberg in conflict with those of Stravinsky. Listening to Schoenberg’s music, however, and reflecting on the many composers inspired by his ideas, reveals that his potency remains both intellectual and emotional.

***Fünf Orchesterstücke*, op.16 (1909) (Five Pieces for Orchestra)**

for flute/piccolo, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French horn, harmonium, piano, violins, viola, cello, and bass, arranged by Felix Greissle (1925)

Schoenberg’s *Five Pieces for Orchestra* represent a major transition in the composer’s early career. Amidst the flood of atonal music written between 1907 and 1909, they separate his early romantic works from his later twelve-tone ones. Apart from the romantic tone poem *Pelleas et Melisande*, they also represent his first publicly performed orchestral composition and thus one of his first confrontations with the expectations of the concert hall. Like the earlier symphonic poem, the *Pieces for Orchestra* were initiated at the suggestion of Richard Strauss, then famous in Vienna not only for his operas but also for his conducting. In response to the more experienced composer’s practical hint that something on a modest scale would be more likely to gain a performance, Schoenberg wrote five discrete movements initially identified only by their tempo markings—*sehr rasch* (very quick), *mässige Viertel* (moderate quarter notes), etc.—titles that did little to elucidate Schoenberg’s challenging musical language.

Despite his orchestral aspirations, Schoenberg’s conception of the work was decidedly unconventional. He wrote to Strauss that the pieces would be “something really colossal, especially in sound and mood. For that is what they are all about—completely unsymphonic, devoid of architecture or construction, just an uninterrupted change of colors, rhythms, and moods. The music seeks to express all that swells in us subconsciously like a dream.” After looking over the score, however, Strauss formed a rather pessimistic view of the collection’s concert potential. Schoenberg himself directed the partial performance of a two-piano arrangement (created by

Webern) in Berlin in early 1912, but the piece had to wait until September of that year to achieve its first full orchestral hearing at Sir Henry Wood's Promenade Concerts in London. Although the London public took some time to warm up to the music, when the pieces were heard again in 1914 with Schoenberg himself on the scene, they became one of his first critical successes and a powerful introduction to the non-German-speaking world.

Schoenberg continued to revise his score, in the process creating a chamber orchestra version for Zemlinsky to present at a 1920 concert for the Prague branch of the Society for Private Musical Performances. In the ongoing quest to bring the score to public notice, Schoenberg also came up with more evocative movement titles, which were, he confided to his diary, added only at the request of his publisher and not in order to indicate true "poetic content." In fact, he took some comfort from the conviction that his poetic afterthoughts were not likely to reveal very much, being "partly technical, partly very obscure." Whatever their usefulness, these titles were well in place by 1925, when his son-in-law, Felix Greissle, made the definitive arrangement for chamber orchestra that we will hear tonight.

The most famous of Schoenberg's titles is the third: *Farben* (Colors): *Sommermorgen am See* (Summer morning on the water). For this middle movement of the set—the only one for which the composer had originally considered using a title ("Chord Colors")—he wrote what may be considered a remarkable essay in tone color. The piece is dominated by a single chord whose changes in timbre and registration lend the music its sense of movement. From this procedure arose the impressive German appellation *klangfarbenmelodie*, or "tone-color melody." British critic Ernest Newman (without recourse to the later subtitles) described the movement as a "shimmering, gently heaving sea of tone" and called attention to the effect that Schoenberg's keen ear for timbre had upon listeners' perceptions of his dissonant harmonies: "Discords that on paper look unendurable and meaningless are tinted in such a way that one feels only a vague and often most alluring effect of atmosphere and distance." In the surrounding movements, Newman observed, "the main effect comes from the harmonic and

orchestral colour and the sense of driving energy conveyed by the rhythmic motion." Whether Schoenberg intended it or not, the emotional intensity of the added titles aptly reflects the music's gestural quality: psychologically complicated moments (premonitions and memories), rapid reversals (crisis or peripeteia, a term drawn from Greek tragedy to describe a sudden change in circumstances), or brief and stylized utterances (recitative).

Writing in 1914, Newman recognized Schoenberg's remarkable ear: "He treats dissonance as a tonal language, complete and satisfying in itself, owing no allegiance, or even lip-service to consonance, either at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the work. It is amazing how far we can already go with him, how strangely beautiful and moving much of this music is, that, judged by the eye alone, is a mere jumble of discordant parts.... Time alone can show whether it is our harmonic sense that thinks too slowly, or Schoenberg's harmonic sense that thinks a little too rapidly for the rest of the world." Listening in 2001, and reflecting on the other pieces on tonight's program, we can affirm that Schoenberg's "strangely beautiful" music has left a powerful legacy, inspiring successive generations to envision new musical beauties all their own.

—Program notes by Beth Levy

Featured Performers

Roy Malan, violin, was educated in London with Yehudi Menuhin, and at Juilliard and the Curtis Institute, where he was a student of Ivan Galamian and Efram Zimbalist. Malan is concertmaster and solo violinist for the San Francisco Ballet. He has appeared as a soloist at Washington's Kennedy Center and Lincoln Center in New York. He is also founder and co-director of the Telluride Chamber Music Festival in Colorado, and serves on the faculty of the University of California, Santa Cruz. Malan joined the Contemporary Music Players in 1976.

Thomas Schultz, piano, has championed new music in his many solo recitals, in recordings, and in performances with Robert Craft's 20th Century Classics Ensemble. His recording with Mark Wait of Stravinsky's Concerto for Two Solo Pianos has recently been released on the MusicMasters label. Schultz was director of the 1990-91 Capp Street New Music Series in San Francisco, and now serves on the faculty of Stanford University. He has performed with the Contemporary Music Players since 1994.

Conductor

Jean-Louis LeRoux, who co-founded the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, is serving as the ensemble's Interim Music Director this season. LeRoux previously led the ensemble as Music Director from 1975 until 1988. A native of France and a graduate of the Paris Conservatoire, LeRoux joined the San Francisco Symphony as Principal Oboist in 1960. In 1975, he became Conductor of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, a position he held for seventeen years. LeRoux has been named Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France's highest cultural honor. In recent years, he has been active as Principal Conductor and Music Director of the Alberta Ballet. This season, in addition to his work with SFCMP, he is Guest Conductor of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra.

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 99 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 virtuosi 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 performance/presentations and master classes.

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Edwin Dugger's *Music for Synthesizer and Six Instruments* can be heard on a compact disc together with works by Robert Erickson, Harvey Sollberger, Peter Westergaard, and Phillip Rhodes (New World/Albany). In addition, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players has recorded two of his pieces on LP albums for CRI: the impressive Septet (dedicated to Earl Kim on his 60th birthday) and *Intermezzi*, conducted by Jean-Louis LeRoux. The latter album also includes *Abwesenheiten und Wiedersehen* (Absences and reunions) performed by the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players under Jonathan Kuhner. Dugger's dramatic instrumental work *In Opera's Shadow* has been featured on a Composers Award Recording (CRI).

There are two fine recordings of **Luigi Nono's** *...sofferte onde serene...*, the classic rendering by the piece's dedicatee Maurizio Pollini (Deutsche Grammophon) and a more recent performance with Markus Hinterhäuser (Col Legno). The first offers two of Nono's earlier efforts in electronic media, *Contrappunto dialettico all mente* for tape (1968) and *Como una ola de fuerza y luz* of 1971 (for soprano, piano, orchestra, and tape). The second disc focuses on slightly later music: the stunning tribute *Con Luigi Dallapiccola* (1979) for six percussionists with electronics and *Das atmende Klarsein* on texts by Rainer Maria Rilke and ancient Orphic fragments (1980-81). More of Nono's music for live electronics—*Guai ai gelidi mostri* and *Omaggio a György Kurtág*—can be heard on the third volume of the Ensemble Recherche's *Luigi Nono* series (Montaigne Auvidis). From recordings of the composer's earlier music, I would suggest the Sony disc featuring *Il Canto Sospeso*, played by the Berlin Philharmonic under Claudio Abbado.

For an excellent survey of **Gordon Mumma's** electronic work from the 1950s-80s, I would recommend *Studio Retrospect* (Lovely Music, Ltd.). The disc contains *Retrospect* (1959), a set of short pieces created for various ensembles including the Merce Cunningham Dance Company; *Music from the Venezia Space*

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Theatre (1964), requested by Luigi Nono; *The Dresden Interleaf 13 February 1945* (1965); *Echo-D* (1978); *Pontpoint* (1966-80), and *Epifont* (1984), composed in memory of George Cacioppo. A representative sampling of his electro-acoustic pieces is available from Tzadik and includes five pieces performed with Robert Ashley, David Tudor, and William Winant.

Cybersonic Cantilevers appears on the Smithsonian Folkways LP collection *New American Music: New York Section, Composers in the 1970s*. Mumma's *Faisandage et Gamilafree* for diverse trios of instruments has been recorded by artists including Leta Miller (flutist and musicologist at U. C. Santa Cruz) on an LP titled *The Prismatic Flute: Dramatic Chamber Works*. Harpsichordist Linda Burman-Hall has recorded two of his works under the title *New Music for Early Instruments* (Musical Heritage Society): *Eleven Note Pieces & Decimal Passacaglia* and *Octal Waltz*, which uses an eight-note equal temperament.

A fine performance of **Pierre Boulez's** *Anthèmes II* with Hae-Sun Kang, violin, and Andrew Gerzso, electronics, has recently been released by Deutsche Grammophon on a disc that also includes the composer's *Sur Incises*, which won the Grawemeyer Award (2000). In addition to the voluminous body of recordings featuring Boulez as the conductor of other composers' works, recent recordings of his own music include a collaborative performance of *Répons* by the Ensemble InterContemporain paired with Alain Damiens's rendering of *Dialogue de L'Ombre Double*, for solo clarinet and electronics, courtesy of IRCAM (Deutsche Grammophon). Also of interest is *Boulez conducts Boulez* (Deutsche Grammophon) featuring pianists Pierre-Laurent Aimard and Florent Boffard, and Boulez leading members of the Ensemble InterContemporain, including Sophie Cherrier and Emmanuelle Ophèle. The disc offers a chronological sampling of his output, including the early piano works *Notations* and *Structures* as well as the recent electroacoustic *...explosante-fixe....* Sony Classical's *Pierre Boulez Edition* has recently reis-

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sued the monumental *Pli Selon Pli* with Boulez leading the BBC Symphony and a disc that contains the Ensemble InterContemporain's renderings of *Rituel in Memoriam Maderna*, *Eclat*, and *Multiples*.

Many of Boulez's own writings have been published in such collections as *Orientations* (Harvard) and *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship* (Oxford), in addition to the *Boulez-Cage Correspondence*, edited by Jean-Jacques Nattiez and Robert Samuels (Cambridge). A good and readable biography by Dominique Jameaux is also available as translated by Susan Bradshaw. For a fascinating but controversial look at the inner workings of IRCAM under Boulez's directorship, read Georgina Born's *Rationalizing Culture* (U. California).

All the early works of Arnold Schoenberg have received numerous fine performances on relatively recent recordings. The original version of the *Five Orchestral Pieces* can be heard as conducted by Hans Rosbaud on two different Wergo discs, one including the Cello Concerto, *Moderner Psalm*, and *Variations for Orchestra*, and the other featuring the *Ode to Napoleon* and *Pierrot Lunaire*, with Jeanne Héricard, soprano. Boulez has also recorded the *Orchesterstücke* along with Schoenberg's *Serenade* (Sony Classics). Among available performances of *Gurrelieder*, I recommend Giuseppe Sinopoli's performance with the Prague Chamber Chorus, Dresden State Opera Chorus, Leipzig Radio Orchestra, and soloists Thomas Moser, Deborah Voigt, and Jennifer Larmore. Lucy Shelton and the Da Capo Chamber Players under Oliver Knussen give striking performances of *Pierrot* (in both English and German) and *Herzgewächse* on Bridge; some stores also stock Jan DeGaetani's now classic performance of *Pierrot* coupled with the beautiful atonal song cycle *The Book of the Hanging Gardens* (Nonesuch). Recordings of the composer's String Quartets, including the Arditti Quartet's performances (with Dawn Upshaw) for Naïve Montaigne allow listeners to hear the evolution of Schoenberg's style within a sin-

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gle genre. Chandos has also issued a collection comprising five discs of the composer's works.

Among the excellent essay collections devoted to the composer are the *Arnold Schoenberg Companion*, edited by Walter Bailey (Greenwood) and *Schoenberg and His World*, edited by Walter Frisch (Princeton). A fine selection of Schoenberg's own writings appears in *Style and Idea*, edited by Leonard Stein and translated by Leo Black. Readers may also enjoy Charles Rosen's recently re-issued monograph *Arnold Schoenberg* (U. Chicago).

—Beth Levy

For more information about the **San Francisco Contemporary Music Players'** available recordings, please visit the website, www.sfcmp.org.

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