Performers
Stacey Pelinka, flute, piccolo
Carey Bell, clarinet, bass clarinet
Peter Josheff, clarinet
Deborah Shidler, oboe, English horn
Rufus Olivier, bassoon
Lawrence Ragent, horn
Jeff Biancalana, trumpet, piccolo trumpet
Hall Goff, trombone
Julie Steinberg, piano
Teresa McCollough, keyboard
Chryssie Nanou, keyboard
Michael Seth Orland, keyboard
Betty Woo, keyboard
Roy Malan, violin
Stephen Harrison, cello
Richard Worn, contrabass
Florian Conzetti, percussion

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San Francisco Contemporary Music Players
David Milnes, Music Director
Monday, 12 December 2005  8 pm
Herbst Theatre, War Memorial Veterans Building

Dazzling New Music from France

François Paris
12 préludes pour quatre pianos imaginaires
(12 preludes for four imaginary pianos) (1995)
United States premiere

Pascal Dusapin
Cascando (1997)

~ INTERMISSION ~

Philippe Hurel
Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey (1999)
(in four movements)
Julie Steinberg, piano  William Winant, percussion

Philippe Leroux
Voï(REX) (2002)
United States premiere
Donatienne Michel-Dansac, soprano
Introduction
I. L’invisible debout (The standing invisible)
II. Jusque (Until)
III. De part [...] En part (Through [...] and through)
IV. Devant tout autour (In front of everything all around)
V. L’inachevé à son faîte (The unfinished at its summit)
Not the singer, not the song

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FRANÇOIS PARIS (b. 1961)

Since the influential postwar activities of Olivier Messiaen in the late 1940s, and continuing into the 1950s with Pierre Schaeffer’s experiments in electronic music and the pathbreaking works of Pierre Boulez, a French avant-garde has examined, more or less systematically, new spiritual and technological approaches to sound. The 1970s saw the creation of the prestigious Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM), founded by Boulez and funded by the French government. At the same time, Gérard Grisey, together with Tristan Murail and others (sometimes known as the “Spectral” school), launched the group L’Itinéraire, devoted to creative investigation of the physical aspects of sound production. This concert celebrates recent works from France, written by the generation who came to maturity just after Grisey, sometimes under his tutelage, sometimes independently, but always in a musical milieu that valued explorations in time and timbre, homage and innovation. These preoccupations are central to the aesthetic decisions of François Paris, the youngest of the four composers featured on tonight’s program and a man known for his flexible relation to tradition and his easy embrace of twentieth-century developments in the arts.

Paris was trained in orchestration and composition at the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied with Ivo Malec, Betsy Jolas, and Grisey and became a proficient conductor, able to lead performances of his own music for Radio France and for the new music courses at Darmstadt. His earliest music shows both his French harmonic inheritance and the dramatic approach that would come to characterize his later works. The cello solo *Roque (Castling)* (1990), for example, takes its title from Milan Kundera’s thoughts on chess, in *L’immortalité*, and its substance from an intense collaboration with cellist Florian Lauridon. Its harmonic language is fully in keeping with the “Spectral” school, giving special emphasis to the pitches that sound as part of the overtone series when the cellist plays one of its open strings. The melodic and rhythmic language of *Roque*, however, suggests a special attention to the act of performance. Paris notes, “A
work for solo instrument very often implies a certain ‘violence of
writing’ in the sense that all energies are concentrated on one and
only one point.” This single source should bring into existence every
aspect of the music: “the unsaid, the reflections, the extensions imagined or derived from the instrumental gestures, the shadow of the
soloist.” The collaborative implications of Roque found further
expression in Lecture d’une vague (Reading of a Wave) (1992), inspired by Italo Calvino’s novel Mr. Palomar. Here, the composer specifies that the solo flutist should “ground” herself in a pre-recorded mix of five other flutes; likewise, the sound engineer may be considered “fully an interpreter in his own right” as he helps realize the work with the particular electronic media at his disposal.

Paris conceived Lecture d’une vague as the prelude to a larger cycle of pieces, les champs de l’ombre blanche (The Fields of the White Shadow). As such, it hints at one of the more striking facets of the composer’s method: a tendency to build new works quite literally on the basis of older ones. Sometimes this takes the shape through revisions so pervasive that the “revised” piece is really a new creation. The septet Sur la nuque de la mer étoilée (On the Nape of the Starry Sea) was originally finished in 1994 but completely reworked in 2002-03 to take account of what Paris calls “new possibilities created in part by the evolution in my own musical language and in part . . . by recent technological developments,” specifically those associated with “contextual synthesis,” in which the nuances of live performance help trigger and shape the unfolding electronic components. A more complicated relationship exists among Paris’s 1998 cello concerto L’empreinte du cygne (The Impression of the Swan), his violin solo Sombra (Shade) of 1999, and his quartet Soleado (Sunny), written the following year and dedicated to Philippe and Emmanuelle Leroux. Just as Sombra represented “an attempt at deepening the questions posed by the [cello concerto],” so Soleado presented “another side” of Sombra. More specifically, he writes: “Between the shadow and the light, one may find two visions of the same material, the same harmonic environment, common rhythmic elements and manners of development. The two works, in fact, have but little relationship to one another because the context (or the light) in which their common elements are presented is so radically different.”

Literal collaboration between artists and figurative “collaboration” between creation and tradition remain hallmarks of Paris’s output. His 2004 Drei Handspiele (Three Hand-games) for six a capella voices interweaves a lullaby, Louis Armstrong’s “What a Wonderful World,” and gestures drawn from a variant of the classic “rock-paper-scissors” game of chance. Still more recently, he completed a score for Jean Vigo’s 1929 silent film A propos de Nice and, between these undertakings, he found time to initiate a large-scale project involving music and dance, co-sponsored by CIRM (National Center for Musical Creation) and Les Percussions de Strasbourg and scheduled for a complete premiere in May 2007. According to the composer, the percussion sextet Senza (Without) represents both the beginning of this new cycle and a continuation of the long-standing interest in “anamorphosis” (sonic metamorphosis through various processes of artful distortion) that also characterize his 12 préludes pour quatre pianos imaginaires.

Paris gained European fame in 1993, when he won a “triple crown” of sorts: a prize (awarded by Luciano Berio) at the International Competition of Besançon, a commission from IRCAM, and a residency (sponsored by the French Academy in Rome) at the Villa Medici, where he remained until 1995. In 1999, he received a prize from the French Association for Artistic Action’s program “Villa Medici and Beyond,” and two years later, he won the Claude Arrieu prize from SACEM (Society of Authors, Composers, and Music Editors), the French organization in charge of copyright and royalties. Paris has received commissions from Itinéraire, Radio-France, Nuova Arca, and the French government and was the director of music in Sarcelles for three years. In 2004, he became a Professor at Capital Normal University in Beijing, while continuing to direct CIRM in Nice and their annual festival MANCA (New Music Nice/Côte d’Azur).

12 préludes pour quatre pianos imaginaires
(12 Preludes for Four Imaginary Pianos) (1995)
for four digitally sampled pianos

The composer writes, “These twelve preludes were written for imagi-
For years I have been accused of being too accessible,” reported Pascal Dusapin in a New York Times interview with Alan Riding: “In the evangelical world of contemporary music, you can’t talk of love, emotion, expression. It’s badly viewed.” So speaks a composer who has distanced himself from avant-garde ideology without abandoning avant-garde music. Dusapin has kept his distance from musical institutions in general and (apart from a brief foray in 1976) from IRCAM in particular. Although he has been composer-in-residence for a variety of groups, he makes his living primarily as a free-lance composer. He has used electronics only rarely in his works to date and, just in case anyone might miss the point of his independence, he has stated outright: “I think I am proof that you can live without Boulez.”

Dusapin’s early inclinations set him apart from many of his compatriots. He was trained as an organist and studied art history at the Sorbonne from 1974-78, while composing largely on his own. Lecoq of Radio-France has observed, these last two figures exerted an audible influence on Dusapin’s early works including Souvenir de Silence (1976, inspired by Donatoni) and Timee (1978, dedicated to Xenakis).

Dedicated to Fausto Romitelli, Paris’s 12 préludes employ a changing constellation of four different tuning systems, only one of which matches the “equal temperament” system that gradually became standard keyboard practice after the eighteenth century. Moreover, there are always at least two (and usually three) of the available tuning systems “in play” for any given Prelude. The work thus offers a shifting landscape that plays not just with pitch, but also with time (as the poetry suggests) and even with space (as it proves impossible to trace particular sounds back to their proper electronic keyboards).
produced two operas, an oratorio, ten orchestral scores, and a host of chamber works, including commissions from the Arditti String Quartet and the ensemble Accroche-Note. He has won prizes from SACEM, the Académie des Beaux-Arts, Critics’ Association, the French Ministry of Culture. In addition to receiving fellowships to work at the Villa Medici (1981-83) and in the United States in 1988, he has been composer-in-residence with the Orchestre National de Lyon and has worked with such choreographers as Regine Chopinot and François Raffinot. In 2003, *To Be Sung* was featured at the Sounds French festival and his new opera *Perelà*, uomo di fumo (*Perelà: Man of Smoke*) (1998-2001), received a prestigious premiere at the Opéra National de Paris/Bastille under the baton of James Conlon. He is currently working on an opera based on Christopher Marlowe’s *Faustus*.

**Cascando (Cascading) (1997)**

*Dusapin* has long counted hearing a performance of Edgard Varèse’s large orchestral score *Arcana* as one of his formative musical experiences. In his octet *Cascando*, he has chosen to replicate the more limited instrumentation of Varèse’s *Octandre*, for woodwinds, brass, and double bass—the same instrumentarium that accompanies *Dona Eis*, completed the same year. Like the composer’s chamber music for strings, *Cascando* suggests an ensemble breathing and speaking as one meta-instrument. Here, too, the resulting texture ripples with rhythmic activity not unlike the emergent patterns of minimalist music, but far less regular. Pitch material is limited—especially at the beginning and end of the piece—to focus attention on collective motion that is now propulsive, now lingering, sometimes static, but never leisurely, as *Dusapin*’s potential energy is never far from the musical surface. Although individual instruments tend to melt into the ensemble’s overall sound, there are some notable exceptions: occasional horn calls in the distance, the uppermost registers of the bird-like piccolo, and especially the chant-like sliding of the trombone, which seems to offer a benediction before the congregation of players disperses. Unifying the whole is a
gentle emphasis on downward motion that may have given *Cascando* its title. Unison statements tend to descend, climactic moments are marked by falling figures, and the repeated Ds that open the piece yield to C#s at the end, giving the entire piece the character of a miniature drama, wrapped up in an extended sigh.

*Cascando* was commissioned by the Essl Collection (founded by Karlheinz Essl) for performance in the Schömer-Haus auditorium, and it received its premiere during the 1997 Wien Modern Festival. The work is dedicated to Ivan Fedele, whose *Maja* was performed by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players last November.

PHILIPPE HUREL (B. 1955)

Keenly aware of his place in the history of French music, Hurel is an articulate spokesperson for the diverse generation of composers following Murail and Grisey. In the wake of his participation in the 2003 Sounds French festival, sponsored by the French Association for Artistic Action, he was asked to explain the event’s unifying themes. In conversation with Matthias Kriesberg of The New York Times, he replied: “From Debussy through to spectral composers, [French] music has been organized around harmony.” Hurel neatly encapsulates the historical importance of both the French impressionists’ colorful chords and the spectralists’ attention to the resonant harmonics inherent in the overtone series above any fundamental pitch. Yet if this formulation is also meant to reveal something about Hurel’s own music, then we must consider “harmony” in the very broadest sense of the term—as did the founding figures of spectralism—for Hurel has always coupled his attention to pitch with a tendency toward counterpoint and, in more recent years, with a desire to enliven his music with a wide range of rhythmic characters, including passages reminiscent of jazz.

Like Leroux and Paris, Hurel worked with Jolas and Malec during his years at the Paris Conservatoire. He also studied computer music privately with Tristan Murail in 1983-84. Not surprisingly, his first compositions paid special attention to the relationships between harmony and timbre (tone color) and to the gradual metamorphosis of musical materials. In works like his tenor saxophone solo *Opit* (1983-84; revised for clarinet in 1993), Hurel exploited the instrument’s entire range of timbres, from the guttural to the ethereal. Among his larger scores, *Fragment de lune* (*Moon Fragment*) (1986-87) added electronic components to blur the boundaries between acoustic and synthetic sound. During the late 1980s, Hurel became increasingly preoccupied with the internal counterpoint of his music. He observes that *Pour l’Image* (1986-87) initiated a series of works using ever denser notation and ever more “saturated,” rigorous polyphony, reaching a culmination point in 1994 with *Pour Luigi*.

Beginning in the 1990s, a more radical transformation took place as the composer came to grips with rhythms drawn not just from the classical tradition, but from jazz and popular musics as well. Between his *Six miniatures en trompe-l’oeil*, written in 1991, and the *Quatre Variations* of 1999-2000, Hurel recalls that he was “trying to consolidate two worlds whose coexistence sometimes seems impossible: rhythms derived from jazz and funk, together with the harmonic and formal work achieved through spectral techniques.” For whatever reason, the vibraphone seems to have had a special role in broadening Hurel’s rhythmic frame of reference. In addition to being a dominant player in his sextet. . . *B mesure* (1996) and half of the featured duo in his homage to Grisey, the vibraphone is the central character in *Quatre variations*, which pits the percussion soloist against a sixteen-piece orchestra, and the solo voice in *Loops II* (2000-02), which involves a “process of cell transformation [that] always brings you back to the motif announced at the outset.” Since 2000, Hurel’s works have been inspired less by jazz and more by an attempt to synthesize the compositional facets of his earlier scores. He deepened his interest in counterpoint with the octet *Figures libres* (2001), *Aura* (2002) for piano and orchestra, and *Trois études mécaniques* (2004), in which rhythmic canons (generated in part by computer software) coalesce at times into material that the composer has called his “imaginary folklore” because of its resemblance to various “world musics.” Also in 2004, Hurel paid homage to Luciano Berio in his *Ritornello* (2004; for flute and piano) and to Debussy in *Phonus* (2004; for flute and orchestra)—two works in which the rhythmic patterns of his “loop” pieces mingle with contrapuntal and variation techniques as

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well as harmonies reminiscent of “spectralism.”

The kinetic energy and harmonic ingenuity of Hurel’s scores has captured the attention of many performing artists, including the choreographer François Raffinot, who took the *Six miniatures en trompe-l’œil* as the basis for his 1997 ballet *Rift*. In describing the immediacy of Hurel’s music, he offers what might be considered a “concert-goers’ guide” to the works of this innovative French composer: “Listen to these evolving textures, the constant renewal,” Raffinot writes. “And then listen for the brusque sonorous signals that return from earlier passages. The incandescent wash of sound suddenly crystallizes in place, stopped short in the midst of its progression. A musical moment suspended, as a melting lava flow plunges into the sea and freezes, for the space of a second or less, passing suddenly through a musical inferno of cadmium red, luminous and inexorable to this language of sounds, black, sooty, corrugated, shadowy, subdued and aged, before bursting anew under the pressure of new acoustic waves. . . . How can you understand these new alloys?”

In addition to being a fellow at the Villa Medici from 1986-88, Hurel has won the Förderpreis from the Siemens-Stiftung in Munich as well as two prizes from SACEM. He has earned commissions from Ensemble Intercontemporain, IRCAM, the New York New Music Ensemble, the Orchestre de Paris, Radio-France, Les Percussions de Strasbourg, Interface, Ensemble Recherche, Itinéraire, Bit20, Cité de la Musique, the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo’s Shizuoka Hall, and the French Ministry of Culture, among others. In addition to teaching at IRCAM from 1997-2001, he has served as composer-in-residence at the Arsenal de Metz and the Philharmonie de Lorraine. In 1990, Hurel founded Ensemble Court-circuit and became its artistic director. In 2004, he joined the faculty of McGill University, which featured several of his pieces at their Festival MusiMars, including the *Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey*. He has recently finished a work for voice and six instruments, *CANTUS*, which was commissioned by the French government for Françoise Kubler and Accroche-Note, and he is currently working on a piece for percussion and electronics commissioned by IRCAM for premiere at the Agora Festival in 2006.

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**Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey (1999)**

*for piano and percussion*

When recounting the origins of his piano-percussion duo *Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey*, Hurel describes two moments of great intensity: hearing the long solo piano section of Grisey’s *Vortex temporum* (performed by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 2003); and the emotional aftermath following Grisey’s untimely death: “The rapid juxtaposition of widely differentiated elements, as well as the constraints imposed by the tuning of the piano (four of its notes are deliberately put out of tune), lead to an impressive display of compositional and performing skills. Never had Gérard’s music sounded so violent to my ears. Despite . . . the apparently untamed sound of the solo, it was the deliberate gestures that engaged my attention, for they gave rise to dramatic tension at every instant.”

“When Gérard died, I was working on a piece for piano and vibraphone of a playful nature. The immense grief that suddenly overwhelmed me led me to abandon the project, of which nothing but the instrument names remained. How better could I pay homage to Gérard, other than writing my very own music, with no reference to his, no signs of his influence? Nevertheless, it was the very violence of the *Vortex temporum* solo that started my piece off. It was imperative not to study the score, and yet to retain its force and use it as a metaphor. I had never had to confront this type of work before. The piece took on the appearance of a ritual, and the vibraphone player found himself with extra instruments such as cow bells, Thai gongs, crotalas and woodblocks—all to ‘disturb’ the piano without actually putting it out of tune, as Grisey had done. For the first time ever, my music would not be objective. I had great difficulty in evaluating the material, and my momentary yielding to complete intuition might not have pleased the dedicatee. The piece is, however, imbued with Grisey’s spirit, and could not have seen the light of day without him.”
For the last twenty years, Philippe Leroux has opened ears worldwide with music that radiates energy, revealing the inner life of individual sonorities against a musical fabric that is always buoyant and in motion. Already central to France’s contemporary music scene, Leroux writes spontaneously playful, yet carefully constructed scores that are winning him ever greater recognition from ensembles in the United States, including the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, which follows its 2003 U.S. premiere of M with tonight’s U.S. premiere of VOI(REX).

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

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

Even without delving into the technical components of Leroux’s style, one can appreciate the emphasis on motion in the titles of some of his best known works: the chamber piece Fleuve (River, 1988), the quintet Continuo(ns) (1994), and the Violin Concerto (d’)ALLER (1995). Underlying these evocative titles, are myriad ways of creating and dispelling momentum. In (d’)ALLER, for example, rapid scales and arpeggios seem to shrink and expand as notes are added or removed, forming a shimmering backdrop for the contest between soloist and ensemble. This concerto is the central panel in Leroux’s triptych Continuo(ns)-(d’)ALLER-Plus Loin (1999-2000), whose titles collectively spell out what might be considered an artistic credo: “Let us go farther.”

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

Leroux’s works have been commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, IRCAM, l’Ensemble Intercontemporain, Festival Musica, Les Percussions de Strasbourg, Norway’s BIT 20, and the Belgian group Ictus. His music has been heard around the world at the Tempo, Music Today, Agora, Roma-Europa, Nuove Synchronie, Bath and numerous other Festivals as well as in performance by New York’s New Music Ensemble and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. In 1994, he received SACEM’s Hervé Dugardin prize, and two years later, he won their second prize for his Violin Concerto (d’)ALLER. From 1993-95, he was Resident at the Académie de France in Rome, and he currently teaches at IRCAM. The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players...
has recently commissioned a new work from Leroux with the support of the Koussevitzky Music Foundation; it will be performed in the 2007-2008 season.

**VOI(REX) (2002)**

for voice, flute/piccolo, clarinet/bass clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, piano, and electronics

voir: v. tr. to see, to consider, to understand
voie: n. line, way, means
voix: n. voice

As its title suggests, *VOI(REX)* inhabits a world in which meaning hangs on the balance of a single letter. Built on words by Lin Delpierre, its five movements (played without pause) offer a thorough-going sonic exploration of the act of writing and the written forms of letters. Leroux explains: “The idea for this came to me when I was getting interested in the form of [sound] waves (sinusoidal, triangular, square...). Waves are, in a way, melodic archetypes. Owing to the use of a poetic text in *VOI(REX)*, I thought at great length about the question of writing, in particular learning how to write and the numerous hours that everyone spends learning how to form the letters. These are ‘inscribed’ in us, like elementary gestures. It was thus that I went naturally from the sound translation of wave forms to that of calligraphy.” Leroux’s intertwining of sound shapes and sight lines is both physical and literal. For example, he notes that “the text of the second movement of *VOI(REX)* begins with an ‘A’. The instruments take care of the oblique, rising and falling bars of the letter, and the voice translates the horizontal bar. I believe one hears the melodic profile quite clearly when one knows the letter it represents.”

The electronic components of *VOI(REX)* are drawn largely from vocal sounds, including Leroux’s own voice. The vocalist actually deploys the electronics in live performance, following along in the score and triggering each sequence of sounds by means of a ring-shaped switch on her finger. Even in this potentially rarified realm of computer-generated sound, the traces of writing are apparent, for Leroux (assisted at IRCAM by Frédéric Voisin) crafted a program that shaped musical elements according to the speed and pressure of pencil on paper (or mouse on mousepad) exerted as Leroux wrote out Delpierre’s poetry. The vocal part, too, is text-driven. In addition to executing a staggering range of vocal “characters”—running the gamut from speech to song, high to low, sense to nonsense—she must mime letters, words, and occasionally punctuation marks! As a result, listeners can catch aural glimpses of words in motion even without knowing all the means by which *VOI(REX)* casts its spell.

---Beth E. Levy

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**Un peu de voix**

S’achoppant
À soi même
L’invisible debout
Devant l’oiseau
La gorge noire
De lumière

La bouche désaffectée
Oufusquée de cailloux et de fables
Ses empreintes
De plus en plus profondes
Dans le resserrement du jour

Brident l’expansion dans la clarté

**Part intouchable par**

La bouche
De part
Donatienne Michel-Dansac makes her United States debut with tonight’s concert. She is widely acknowledged as the leading French soprano of her generation for the performance of contemporary music, and a number of France’s leading composers have chosen to compose works for her, including Georges Aperghis (1998 winner of France’s Grand Prix National in music), Philippe Manoury (1998 winner of the Grand Prix in composition for the City of Paris), Gérard Pesson, and Philippe Leroux. In 1988, she interpreted Luciano Berio’s *Labyrinth II* with the Ensemble Intercontemporain, under the direction of Pierre Boulez. She has also been a featured soloist with such groups as the Itinéraire, l’Ensemble Fa, IRCAM, the London Sinfonietta, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio-France, and has appeared at such festivals as Musica de Strasbourg, Milano Musicale, Ultima d’Oslo, Archipel de Genève, and many others.

Michel-Dansac began her musical career at age seven, studying piano and violin. After eight seasons at the Maîtrise de l’Opéra in Nantes, she received a Prix de Chant at the Paris Conservatoire in 1990. In addition to contemporary music, she performs and has recorded Baroque music (Handel, Rameau, Rossi with les Arts Florissants), Romantic music (Debussy, Schubert, Schumann), notably in recital with pianist Vincent Lesterme (Radio-France, Opéra-Bastille), and Classical repertoire (Haydn, Mozart) with the National Orchestra of France, among others. She has collaborated with many leading opera companies, performing at Nantes, Lille, Tours, Montpellier, le Châtelet, la Comédie Française, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Vienna Musikverein, and London’s Alice Tully Hall. She has made three Baroque music recordings for Harmonia Mundi, and has recorded contemporary works for a variety of labels including Nocturne.

Pianist Julie Steinberg performs regularly as a soloist and chamber musician. Since 1980, she has appeared many times with the San Francisco Symphony in such world premiere performances as John Adams’s *Grand Pianola Music*, as a soloist in Arvo Pärt’s *Tabula...*
David Milnes is a conductor of extraordinary breadth and long-standing commitment to contemporary music. In his early years, he studied not only piano and organ, but also clarinet, cello, and voice. Milnes received his undergraduate education in music at SUNY Stony Brook. In 1984, at age 27, he won the prestigious Exxon Conductor position with the San Francisco Symphony. He remained as the Symphony’s Assistant Conductor and Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra until 1986, working closely with Edo de Waart and Herbert Blomstedt. Following study and collaboration with such renowned conductors as Leonard Bernstein, Erich Leinsdorf, Otto-Werner Müller, and Michael Tilson Thomas, he earned his doctorate in conducting from Yale University in 1989.

From 1994-2002, Milnes was Principal Guest Conductor of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra and also guest conducted numerous orchestras across the United States. He has conducted at the Tanglewood, Aspen, and Monadnock Music Festivals, and has led operatic repertoire ranging from Mozart to Weill. He maintains a keen interest in jazz, which has led to appearances on jazz saxophone with Gene Krupa, Chuck Mangione, John Pizzarelli, and Billy Taylor.

In 1996, Milnes joined the music faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, where he directs its symphony orchestra and the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players. He first conducted the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1997, and joined the ensemble as Music Director in June 2002.
The Ensemble

The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players (SFCMP), now in its 35th 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. SFCMP is a nine-time winner of the prestigious national ASCAP/Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music, having commissioned 66 pieces and performed over 1,000 new works, including 52 U.S. and 126 world premieres.

Each season the ensemble performs a subscription series in the Bay Area. It has also toured widely throughout California, with performances on such concert series as San Francisco Performances, Cal Performances, the Stern Grove Festival, the Other Minds Festival, Los Angeles’ Monday Evening Concerts, the Ojai Festival, and the Festival of New American Music in Sacramento. SFCMP made its European debut at the Cheltenham Festival of Music in 1986 and its East Coast debut at the Library of Congress in 2001. The ensemble has recorded eight albums of its own and contributed to eight others. Its musical outreach programs have involved masterclasses, performance demonstrations, and an evening course for adults.

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 serves on the Board of Governors of the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco. Mr. Frey is also a writer; his work has been published in The Mississippi Review.

Director of Operations and Marketing, Matthew Schumaker studied music and philosophy as an undergraduate at Dartmouth and continued as a graduate student at Princeton, where he received an MA in music composition. While at Princeton, he took part in coordinating concert production for the university’s new music ensemble. He subsequently studied composition in Holland with Louis Andriessen. He joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players staff in September, 2004.

Jessica Pascucci, Assistant Director for Development and Communications, graduated from Smith College with a B.A. in Music and Italian Studies. She studied at the Fiesole Music School and researched the conservatory and its connection with contemporary music as a Blumberg Fellow in Florence, Italy. A flutist of seventeen years, she has performed in music ensembles at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and Carnegie Hall. She joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players staff in September, 2005.
**Technical Production Staff**

**Gregory T. Kuhn**, Sound Engineer, is a multi-disciplinary and multi-media artist freelancing in the performing and fine arts as sound engineer, designer, composer, installation designer, collaborator, and fine arts photographer. His works are experienced by audiences around the world often in the contexts of contemporary music and multimedia performances, and in new and experimental media exhibitions in galleries and museums. Upcoming projects in the performing arts include new works by Rinde Eckert, Paul Dresher, Joan Jeanrenaud, and Margaret Jenkins, and concerts by the California EAR Unit and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. His 1999 collaborative installation, “Mori: an Internet based Earthwork” will next be on exhibit at the Arlington (VA) Arts Center Nov. ’05 - Jan. ’06.

**Robert Shumaker**, Recording Engineer, has been recording the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players’ concerts and CD releases for over twenty years. Most recently, he recorded the ensemble’s album of compositions by Andrew Imbrie, and the ensemble’s James Newton album, *As the Sound of Many Waters*. Starting out as an engineer for rock concerts and recordings in San Francisco in the late 1960s, Shumaker went on to tour the Soviet Union twice with the Rova Saxophone Quartet, as well as making a tour of nine countries with the David Grisman Quartet. He has engineered over five hundred commercial recordings of artists ranging from Judy Collins to Diamanda Galas and from Van Morrison to Henry Brant. During the 1970s and ‘80s, he recorded the complete works of Conlon Nancarrow for 1750 Arch Records and Wergo. His work has been twice nominated for a Grammy Award.

**Michael Ferriell Zbyszynski**, Technical Consultant, is a composer, sound artist, performer, and teacher in the field of contemporary electroacoustic music. He holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. in composition from the University of California, Berkeley and studied at the Academy of Music in Cracow, Poland, on a Fulbright Grant. Playing flute, saxophones, clarinet, Yamaha WX-7, live electronics, or things made from coffee cans and PVC, he has appeared with Roscoe Mitchell, Myra Melford, David Wessel, the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, at the Oregon Bach Festival, the Montréal Jazz Festival, and as a soloist at venues from San Diego to Vancouver. He can be heard on the ARTSHIP recording label. Currently, he is a researcher at UC Berkeley’s Center for New Music and Audio Technologies.

**Additional Listening and Reading**

More information about an award-winning CD of works by **François Paris** (featuring soprano Donatienne Michel-Dansac and including *Sur la nuque de la mer étoilée* and *Rogue*, among others) can be found at www.musiquefrancaise.net (MFA).

The discography of **Pascal Dusapin** is extensive, including recordings of *Romée et Juliette* ( Accord), *To Be Sung* (Radio France), and *Perelà* (Naïve), as well as a spectacular rendering of his choral works *Granum sinapis*, *Umbrae mortis*, and *Dona Eis* by the chamber choir Accentus (Montaigne Auvidis). His 7 Études have been recorded by Ian Pace on a CD that also contains the Orchestre de Paris’s performance of his recent score *A quia under Christopher Eschenbach* (Naïve). Available chamber works include Arditti String Quartet’s performance of his Second String Quartet (“Time Zones”) (Montaigne Auvidis), two Accroche-Note discs ( Accord, Harmonic), Barry Sluchin playing *Indeed* (Adda) and the cello octet *Loop* (Transes européennes).

**Philippe Hurel**’s Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey has been recorded on a CD that also includes performances by the Orchestre de Paris and Ensemble Court Circuit of... *á mesure, Pour Luigi*, and *Flash-Back* (aeon). The Ensemble Intercontemporain has recorded *Six miniatures en trompe-l’oeil*, *Opcit*, and *Pour l’image*, and *Leçon de choses* on the Accord label, which has also released *Fragment de lune* as rendered by Musique Oblique. Forthcoming is a CD titled *Loops and Tributes* that will include *Ritornello*, *Loops I, II, and III*, as well as a new recording of Tombeau in memoriam Gérard Grisey.

Several of **Philippe Leroux**’s works have been recorded on European labels available on amazon.com.fr. *VOIR* (REX) has been recorded by Ensemble l’Itinéraire. Listeners may find *Continuo*(ns), *Flècre*, and other selections on a Harmonia Mundi CD; *Souffles et (d’)ALLER* have been issued by Concord. Additional excerpts, including portions of *M*, may be heard on the IRCAM website: http://mac-texier.ircam.fr/textes/c00001323/

—Beth E. Levy
**SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS**

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<td>Susan Freier (1993), violin II</td>
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<td>Stephen Harrison (1982), cello</td>
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<td>Tod Brody (2001), flute</td>
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<td>Carey Bell (2004), clarinet</td>
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<td>Lawrence Ragent (1981), French horn</td>
<td>Daniel Kennedy (1993), percussion</td>
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<td>Christopher Froh (2003), percussion</td>
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*Dates indicate year of joining*

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