SFCMP in concert with MEREDITH MONK

Performing works by

ZORN
MONK
RZEWSKII
BYRON
FUNG
BROWN

Jan 19, 2018
at the San Francisco
Conservatory of Music

in the LABORATORY Series
San Francisco Contemporary Music Players

San Francisco Contemporary Music Players (SFCMP), a 24-member, unionized ensemble of highly skilled musicians, performs innovative, large-ensemble, contemporary classical music with a spotlight on California composers.

SFCMP aims to nourish the creation and dissemination of new works through high-quality musical performances, commissions, education and community outreach. SFCMP promotes the music of composers from across cultures and stylistic traditions who are creating a vast and vital 21st-century musical language. SFCMP seeks to share these experiences with as many people as possible, both in and outside of traditional concert settings.

Tonight’s event is part of SFCMP’s *In the Laboratory* Series, where you will experience contemporary classical works that have pushed the boundaries of the concert format through experimentation and exploration.

WE DEDICATE our 2017-18 season to our artistic director STEVEN SCHICK, in gratitude for his 7 years of dedication to SFCMP. Thank you, Steve!
Steven Schick Solo Performance
SAT, MAR 24, 2018 at Z Space

5:30 pm  Steven Schick
Celebration Reception and Toast

7:00 pm  CONCERT

Artistic Director and percussionist Steven Schick, who celebrates his final season with SFCMP, will perform in a special Saturday evening solo concert made for this occasion.

On the program: Iannis XENAKIS’s Psappha; Kurt SCHWITTERS’s Movements from Ursonate; and a premiere by Celeste ORAM (2018).

Be sure to join us for a pre-concert celebration in honor of maestro Steven Schick
SFCMP in Concert: 4-Concert Weekend Celebration

Celebrating the 85th anniversary of Pauline OLIVEROS’ birth and Steven SCHICK’s final season as SFCMP’s Artistic Director

Z Space, 450 Florida St, SF
Fri., March 23, 2018, 5:30 pm - Sat., March 24, 2018, 11:00 pm

PRE-CONCERT EVENTS
FRI, MAR 23, 2018 at Z Space

5:30 pm Open Dress Rehearsal of Cold mountains, one belt, heartbreak green by Carolyn Chen

6:00 – 6:30 pm Composer Talk: Carolyn Chen in conversation with Steven Schick

CONCERT #1
FRI, MAR 23, 2018 at Z Space

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Galina USTVOLSKAYA
Grand Duet (1957) 22’
Cello and piano

Xavier BETETA
La Catedrale Abandonata (2015) 11’
Flute, clarinet, percussion, piano, violin, viola, cello, contrabass

Carolyn CHEN
Cold mountains, one belt, heartbreak green (2018) 12’ *SFCMP Commission
Bass flute, violin, cello, harp, percussion

Luciano BERIO
Folk Songs (1964) 23’
Soloist Jessica Aszodi
Mezzo-soprano, flute, clarinet, percussion, harp, viola, cello
SFCMP in Concert: 4-Concert Weekend Celebration

CONCERT #2
FRI, MAR 23, 2018 at Z Space

9:30 pm – 11:00 pm
Pauline OLIVEROS
*The Witness* (1980) 60'

Three SF SEARCH Under-30 Bay Area COMPOSERS
3 New Works inspired by Pauline Oliveros (2017)

CONCERT #3
SAT, MAR 24, 2018 at Z Space

7:00 pm Concert
STEVEN SCHICK IN CONCERT
Artistic Director and percussionist Steve Schick will perform works by Iannis XENAKIS, *Psappha*; Kurt SCHWITTERS, Mvmts from *Ursonate*; and a premiere by Celeste ORAM (2018). Be sure to join us for a pre-concert celebration in honor of maestro Steven Schick.

CONCERT #4
SAT, MAR 24, 2018 at Z Space

9:30 pm – 11:00 pm
Morton FELDMAN
*Crippled Symmetry* (1987) 90'
Flute, percussion, piano/celesta

SFCMP.org • 5
Upcoming Events

SFCMP Contemporary Music Master Class with William WINANT
SF Conservatory of Music Recital Hall
Thurs. Feb. 22, 2018, 7:30 - 9:00 pm

In SFCMP’s Master Class series, you will observe some of the most talented Bay Area pre-professional music students as they learn from our renowned ensemble members in front of a live audience. Students will perform contemporary classical pieces that were selected by them. Students perform the music while being mentored in the master techniques, skills, and style of contemporary music. This new music and percussion master class is led by SFCMP percussionist William Winant.

Season Celebration:
SOUND & WINE 2018
Saturday, April 21, 2018, 3:30- 5:30 pm

April is the time for our season celebration, and we hope you’ll join us for live music, great food, good company, and some of our region’s finest wine and beer. Whether you’re new to contemporary classical music or have been a fan for years, we hope you’ll join us to relive your favorite works from the season or hear them for the first time.

Check SFCMP.org for more details, coming soon.
The SFCMP Players

Tod Brody, flute
Kyle Bruckmann, oboe
Sarah Rathke, oboe
Jeff Anderle, clarinet
Peter Josheff, clarinet
Adam Luftman, trumpet
Peter Wahrhaftig, tuba
Chris Froh, percussion
Loren Mach, percussion
William Winant, percussion
Nick Woodbury, percussion
Kate Campbell, piano
Karen Gottlieb, harp
David Tanenbaum, guitar
Hrabba Altadottir, violin
Graeme Jennings, violin
Susan Freier, violin
Roy Malan, violin
Meena Bhasin, viola
Nanci Severance, viola
Hannah Addario-Berry, cello
Stephen Harrison, cello
Richard Worn, contrabass
SFCMP Artistic Director Steven Schick

Percussionist, conductor, and author Steven Schick was born in Iowa and raised in a farming family. For forty years he has championed contemporary music by commissioning or premiering more than one hundred-fifty new works. He was the founding percussionist of the Bang on a Can All-Stars (1992-2002) and served as Artistic Director of the Centre International de Percussion de Genève (2000-2005). Schick is founder and Artistic Director of the percussion group, “red fish blue fish.” Currently he is Music Director of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus and Artistic Director of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players through the 2017-18 season, which is his last with SFCMP.

In 2012 he became the first Artist-in-Residence with the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). Schick is founder and Artistic Director of “Roots and Rhizomes,” a summer course on contemporary percussion music held at the Banff Centre for the Arts. He maintains a lively schedule of guest conducting including appearances with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Nova Chamber Ensemble and the Asko/Schönberg Ensemble. Among his acclaimed publications are a book, “The Percussionist’s Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams,” and numerous recordings. Steven Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego.
Incoming Artistic Director Eric Dudley

Born in Toronto and raised in Connecticut, Eric Dudley leads a multi-faceted career as a conductor, composer, vocalist and pianist deeply engaged in the performance and creation of contemporary music. As a member of the adventurous vocal octet Roomful of Teeth, he tours worldwide and records newly commissioned works with the Grammy Award-winning ensemble. While living in New York City, he conducted and performed with organizations as diverse as Ekmeles and Tenet vocal ensembles, the Choir of Trinity Wall Street, Talea Ensemble, American Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Signal and the New York Philharmonic as a fixture on the new music scene.

For four years, he served as assistant conductor for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra under Paavo Järvi, and recent guest conducting engagements include the Bendigo Festival of Exploratory Music in Australia, Ojai Festival in California, International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) in New York and Finland, and the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center. He was on the faculty of The New School and Mannes College of Music in New York, and currently directs the orchestra program at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. As a pianist and chamber musician, he has performed with members of Novus New York and the Cincinnati and Princeton symphony orchestras, and his own music has been premiered and recorded by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Quey Percussion Duo, and by Roomful of Teeth. Eric lives in Walnut Creek with his wife Melanie and their infant son Ethan.
Message from Incoming Artistic Director Eric Dudley

Dear friends of SFCMP,

As I write my first message to you as incoming Artistic Director, I find myself brimming with energy and excitement for the vital mission of this organization and its dedication to the advancement of new music, both in looking back on its past achievements, and looking ahead to the possibilities in store. Among the thoughts that jump to the forefront of my mind are the dual notions of leading and following, in both musical and broader terms—a duality that provides a connective strand for many of the pieces we encounter on tonight’s program.

Frederic Rzewski’s *Les Moutons de Panurge* is maybe the most obvious basis for such reflection, and we cannot ignore the larger implications behind its subject matter. The character of Panurge from Rabelais’s writings and the allegory of his ill-fated sheep have conceivable parallels not only in musical structure but also in larger societal issues—after all, we find ourselves perhaps now more than ever in an era of having to question our own roles as leaders and followers, while disparate forces here and all over the world engage with what often seem to be irreconcilable viewpoints on the directions our global society ought to take. In an introspective moment we can easily become aware of our potential to act like Panurge, concerned only with self-interest and expediency, or of sharing in the fate of his sheep, blindly following the one he tosses overboard – through conformity or willful ignorance – into an ocean of uncertainty. Sobering as these thoughts may be, they are also calls to action and causes for celebration; it is unequivocally fortunate to live in a sphere where self-determination is a possibility, and where individual thoughts and actions may still have an effect on the wider scope of things in some small way.

A musical equivalent for some of these ideas resides in the realm of canons,
fugues and other imitative devices, all of which derive from the basic impulses of call and response. A canon is literally a rule, in which one voice must follow the established patterns of another after an interval of time, as the leading voice continues in a way that ideally makes some kind of musical sense when cast against the reflection of its former self. In Rzewski’s piece, the occurrence of canons at any time is an inherent possibility, though not necessarily an outcome; it depends on each performer’s execution of the material the composer provides. As the structure unfolds, it comes with the directive that everyone starts together, makes the effort over the course of the process to speed up to nearly twice as fast, and if they diverge from one another, to stay their course in a determined way until everyone reaches the last note in the series – at which point, an improvisation may ensue. The dialectic of the piece asks questions about the very nature of leading and following; what kind of special effort does it take for a group of musicians to follow each other exactly in lock step under such circumstances? If and when one of them misaligns and purposefully remains fixed in their own course, who is the leader and who is the follower? And when the paradigm shifts to the increasingly randomized act of group improvisation, how does that alter or extend those relationships? In the end, a key aspect of Rzewski’s design is what it says about individuality; if people are asked to do exactly the same thing in exactly the same way, it’s only natural that divergence will intrude and the so-called human factor will assert itself.

John Zorn’s Cobra presents a different structure in which the same questions arise; the piece has no specific musical material, but is rather a series of suggested actions and interrelationships guided by hand signals and cues from within the ensemble via prompter. Each realization of the piece by a different group of performers can be vastly dissimilar, depending on the interpretation of signals and the relationships of leading and following established in rehearsal. After his extensive work with Zorn and other improvising musicians, SFCMP
percussionist William Winant is an ideal guide for these possibilities, and the version we hear this evening will be a singular event, made unique by the interactions between him, the players of SFCMP, and the students from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music that join us.

It’s a special pleasure to bring Meredith Monk to the stage, an artist who for years has been a fearless leader in the spheres of contemporary music and multimedia. The selections of hers that we showcase tonight are but a taste of her creative powers, and offer a glimpse of both vocal and instrumental writing that is connected to her work with film. Both works are also intended as stand alone concert works, and have been performed worldwide. Our onstage discussion will explore the genesis of these two pieces and some of the larger themes of her artistic journey, offering a context for listening to performances that again pair talented students from the Conservatory with SFCMP musicians. Also featuring pieces by Vivian Fung and Ryan Brown, two of the Bay Area’s leading young composers, along with excerpts from Seven Etudes for Solo Piano by multi-instrumentalist and cross-genre artist Don Byron, the full scope of tonight’s program offers a rich sampling of multiple points on the spectrum between modes of improvisation and highly structured musical materials, including some equally playful and probing commentary on the age-old game of follow-the-leader.

I welcome you to this evening’s concert, and to what I hope and sense is the starting point of some exciting new musical avenues for us all. Following in the footsteps of Steven Schick, who has guided this organization to such excellent heights over the past several years, I look forward to becoming better acquainted with the many friends and supporters of SFCMP who share in the same passion as its artists, staff, and board, as together we lead the ensemble into its next chapter.

Eric Dudley
Incoming Artistic Director, SFCMP
Special Guest Artist Meredith Monk

MEREDITH MONK is a composer, singer, director/choreographer and creator of new opera, music-theater works, films and installations. Recognized as one of the most unique and influential artists of our time, she is a pioneer in what is now called “extended vocal technique” and “interdisciplinary performance.”

In 1965, Monk began her innovative exploration of the voice as a multifaceted instrument, composing solo pieces for unaccompanied voice and voice and keyboard. In 1978, she formed Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble to further expand her musical textures and forms. The majority of her work can be heard on the ECM label, including the Grammy-nominated impermanence and highly regarded recent release, On Behalf of Nature. Monk has also created vital new repertoire for piano, string quartet, orchestra and chamber ensemble, with recent commissions from the San Francisco Symphony and Carnegie Hall, where she held the 2014-15 Richard and Barbara Debs Composers Chair in conjunction with her 50th Season of creating and performing.

Monk’s recent honors include the esteemed 2017 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize, a 2015 National Medal of Arts from President Obama, and being named one of NPR’s 50 Great Voices and Musical America’s 2012 Composer of the Year. Her work continues to be presented in major venues throughout the world. Monk’s newest music-theater piece, Cellular Songs, will premiere in March at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.
Tonight’s Program
January 19, 2018

Vivian FUNG
Twist (2014) 14’
David Tanenbaum, guitar; Roy Malan, violin

Don BYRON
Etudes 1, 2, 5 and 6 from Etudes for Vocalizing Pianist (2009) 10’
Kate Campbell, piano

Ryan BROWN
Under the Rug (2010) 6’
Nick Woodbury, percussion; Karen Gottlieb, harp; Clio Tilton**, viola;
Kate Campbell*, John Jaworski*, and Wilton Huang*, Yangchunzi Duan+

Meredith MONK
Conversation with Incoming Artistic Director Eric Dudley

Meredith MONK
Cave Song (1988) 5’
Karen Gottlieb, harp; Courtney McPhail+, soprano; Marina Davis+, mezzo-soprano

Meredith MONK
Ellis Island (1981) 5’
Kate Campbell, piano; Taylor Chan+, piano
~ INTERMISSION ~

Frederic RZEWSKI
Les Moutons de Panurge (1969) 12’

Kyle Bruckmann, oboe; Jeff Anderle, clarinet; Nick Woodbury, percussion; 
Margarita Pinkosz+, keyboard; Tin Yi Wong+, keyboard; David Tanenbaum, 
electric guitar; Qianqian Jin+, electronics; Wilton Huang+, violin; 
Natalia Badziak+, viola; Hannah Addario-Berry, cello

John ZORN

Directed by SFCMP ensemble member William Winant

Kyle Bruckmann, oboe; Jeff Anderle, clarinet; Dana Jessen**, bassoon; 
Nick Woodbury, drumkit; Margarita Pinkosz+, keyboard; Tin Yi Wong+, keyboard; 
John Schott**, electric guitar; Yihan Lou+, voice; Qianqian Jin+, electronics; 
Wilton Huang+, violin; Natalia Badziak+, viola; Hannah Addario-Berry, cello

* auxiliary musicians    ** guest artists     + SFCM students

Encouraging and mentoring the next generation of new music performers, SFCMP 
will once again join San Francisco Conservatory of Music students on this program.
If anyone were going to claim a Picasso painting, a forgotten soft drink ad, e.e. cummings, and the Viennese Waltz as influences in the same piece of music, it would be the clarinetist Don Byron. Known as much for his klezmer playing as for his contributions to things like Bill Frisell’s avant Americana, he is a voracious stylistic polymath for whom the etude—short pieces intended to tackle a wide range of technical and stylistic challenges—is a fitting genre. In his Seven Etudes for Piano (2009), which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and here performed in excerpts, Byron deploys that eclecticism in the name of the rhythmic pocket. “At this point in musical history, post-Stravinsky/Schoenberg,” he writes, “playing complicated rhythms correctly enough to create a groove may be the new frontier for the modern classical player.” Which is just a nice way of saying: time to start clapping on the offbeat.

At least here and there. In No.1 “Guernica,” a stuttering short-long rhythmic figure serves as the basis of both an ironic lyricism and something more caustic, dialoguing darkly with Picasso’s grim anti-war canvas. In No.2, melodic rhythm—perceived rhythmic changes caused by shifts in melodic direction—is the focus: sixteenth notes in the left hand imply alternating duple and triple meters as the right hand complicates things with cross rhythms. In No.5, Byron asks the pianist to navigate a landscape largely devoid of metric orientation. And No.6 is a macabre riff on the limping triple time of that earlier-mentioned waltz.

From music born of technical struggle, we move on to a work that releases those fists decidedly: Bay-area composer Ryan Brown’s hypnotic Under the Rug, an oasis of paradisiacal, wintery calm scored for flute, harp, and viola. It was inspired by another creative chameleon:

“The piece was written while I was obsessively transcribing Bjork’s album Vespertine—a crystalline,
delicately textured work about wintertime intimacy, which is full of harps, whispers, and bell-like sounds. *Under the Rug* is my response to that beautiful album. It is my attempt to capture intimate secrets and hidden joys within the framework of a five-minute song."

For Bjork, Verspertine was the result of an attempt to create a kind of private utopia. "It’s sort of about being in your own in your house with your laptop and whispering for a year and just writing a very peaceful song that tiptoes," she has said. The notion is precious, but the album itself isn’t, and *Under the Rug*—remarkable for the disciplined, even austere, restraint it uses to achieve its tiptoeing—dutifully follows suit.

In the beginning, a series of open fourths and fifths delineated by the harp seem to float, creating a sense of peace rooted in mesmeric absorption. The opening pair, G-D, suggests that we are in the world of G here, but subsequent pairs—B-F#, then C#-F#, then G-D—imply that the work had actually begun away from home, so to speak (on the VI), and that B might be the real center. The entrance of the drum on the B-F# part of the cycle adds to the slight disorientation, as does the ambiguous downbeat, achieved in part by a mischievous exploitation of the way we hear the initial short-long rhythm of the opening. But all is still calm. As in a snow globe, disorientation is contained, serving a winter that hypnotizes even as it settles in due course.

We return to an unhinged eclecticism in Vivian Fung’s *Twist* for guitar and violin, named for the spin it puts on three seemingly disparate musical entities: the Baroque prelude, traditional Chinese pipa music, and jam session licks. But there is perhaps a common thread here: all three idioms tend to lean heavily on idiomatic gestures—phrases or rhythmic devices that fall naturally in the hand of the musician—to achieve their results.

In “Twisted Prelude,” the technique of bariolage—essentially, bowed
alternations between two strings to produce drone, timbral, or compound melody effects—is pushed to disintegrated lengths. Alluding to the historical use of the prelude as both a tightly crafted expressive device and a means of warming up, the work’s seesawing bow strokes induce a kind of delirium through which the line between gestural repetition and mechanical compulsion is manically crossed. In “Twisted Pipa,” referencing the four-stringed Chinese court instrument, guitar and violin share the allusive duties, using string bends, pizzicato, and resgatto strumming to deconstruct the sound of that evocative lute. Finally, in “Twisted Jam,” odd-metered grooves, aggressive interlocking phrases, and demented triple-time passages emerge from “licks” that—in one case, at least—do not not evoke the band Soundgarden.

**Meredith Monk** is perhaps best known for her innovative approach to the human voice, which she uses less to convey singerly interiority and subjectivity and more to tap into something universal beyond those things. Her real subject, in other words, is perhaps the eternal, which is one lens we can use to understand her work *Cave Song* and, somewhat by extension, her piano piece *Ellis Island*.

Written for her 1988 film *Book of Days*, which concerns the prophetic, time-leaping inhabitants of a medieval village, *Cave Song* is a duet that embodies notions of temporal overcoming suggested by the film. In the latter, the Jews have been blamed for the impending Plague. And yet the characters’ constant references to the twentieth century—a little girl draws an airplane, for example—encourage us to also see contemporary catastrophes and their overcoming in that grim scene. Time is presented as transparent—the past is seen in the future and the future in the past—and what unites us all in the face of it, Monk suggests, is perseverance.

That along with art and wisdom. When we hear “Cave Song,” a madwoman, who can see all of history, and the little girl, who channels the future, have come together so that the elder...
can transmit her knowledge to the younger. As visionaries, they are also artist-like figures whose imaginations put them even more decidedly outside of time. In the song, two entities similarly unite to create a music that seems to stand outside of time: singer 1 (the girl) enters with a six-bar phrase that repeats before another (the woman) joins in, mid-cycle. Their vocal lines interweave throughout, with the madwoman’s varying rhythmically over time. The piano work “Ellis Island,” which perhaps references another film (Ellis Island, 1981) Monk made about temporal transcendence and struggle, is constructed similarly—as a duet with staggered entrances whose parts interlock and have equal presence. Both works suggest that, though we may enter the temporal stream at different points, we are nonetheless, one.

All hope of achieving oneness across time—at least of a certain kind—is dashed in Frederic Rzewski’s 1969 work Les Moutons de Panurge (Panurge’s Sheep), but not for lack of trying. Scored for “any number of musicians playing melody instruments, and any number of non-musicians playing anything,” it asks the players to inch their way through a single melody via additive and subtractive procedures that virtually guarantee that someone somewhere at some point will get lost. All part of the plan, it turns out.

In the score, where the notes of the aforementioned melody are numbered 1 through 65, Rzewski instructs:

“Read from left to right, playing the notes as follows: 1, 1-2, 1-2-3, 1-2-3-4, etc. When you have reached note 65, play the whole melody once again and then begin subtracting notes from the beginning: 2 through 65, 3 through 65, 4 through 65 and so forth. Hold the last note until everybody has reached it, then begin an improvisation using any instruments.”

But then, crucially: “In the melody […], never stop or falter, always play loud. Stay together as long as you can, but if you get lost, stay lost. Do not try to find your way back to the fold.”
He is alluding here to the work’s inspiration: a scene from Rabelais’s satire *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, in which the impulse to stay together ultimately has consequences: out at sea, a man named Panurge takes revenge on a sheep dealer—he was overcharged—by throwing one of his rams overboard. The rest of the sheep instinctively follow and drown.

Rzewski, it would appear, would prefer that his musicians not drown. But *Les Moutons de Panurge* can’t quite be called a mere critique of the blind leading the blind, since the only way to abandon the flock here is to make a mistake. The question to ask, then, is how to best frame these mistakes and our inevitable enjoyment of them. After all, as with a NASCAR race, much of the thrill in this piece comes from waiting for the musicians to crash.

Except that crashing here means accidental canons and other bits of counterpoint that can be hypnotic and downright pleasant. The “mistakes” retroactively make the unison melody seem like a bad, boring idea. What at first looked like a flub now looks like following one’s gut. From here, the political implications follow clearly enough: personal conviction, even when contrary to consensus, is everything. *Les Moutons de Panurge* was written in 1969, a year that saw the largest anti-war protest in U.S. history, and by a composer who, just six years later, would write the sprawling piano piece *The People United Will Never Be Defeated*. Rzewski believes in flocks, in other words. But only those capable of accommodating difference and dissent.

One can be either a sheep or a shepherd—or rather, a grunt or a general—in John Zorn’s *Cobra* (1984), a game piece that allows the musicians to define the parameters of the improvisational goings on. Widely recognized as one of the iconic works of New York’s Downtown scene in the 80s, *Cobra* has no score, relying instead on an elaborate series of cues relayed between players and a prompter to define the plan of attack. The metaphor is intentional: the title comes from a once-popular war simulation game (think Dungeons & Dragons) that
allowed players to recreate WWII cat-and-mousing on the Normandy peninsula. Until the 1990s, the workings of Cobra were Normandy-level classified due to Zorn’s insistence that its rules only be transmitted orally. But secrets get out, and today, it’s easy to find the cues and their rules. They are hand signals, for the most part, which the musicians offer up to a prompter, who then chooses among them to determine the course of the music. Some examples: If a player covers her mouth and holds up three fingers, those playing must stop and those not playing must come in; if another dons a headband—a “guerrilla” tactic, as the cue sheet says—they become “lone renegades” and can, for the time being, play whatever they want. And so on.

What we are rewarded with by this cryptic spectacle is not only potentially riveting cacophony but also a “psychodrama,” to use Zorn’s word, in which the personality of the individual players plays a part. Who would dare touch their ear and raise one finger—the signal to radically change the music at the downbeat—but someone fairly bold or impetuous? Who would put on the headband and play renegade? Perhaps someone with dad issues.

*Cobra* is not a work for shrinking violets, in other words. But then again, what work is? All good ensemble playing demands assertiveness while being at the mercy of subtle group dynamics. In *Cobra*, the difference is that all of those mini-dramas of desire and assertion, acceptance and rejection, are made explicit. As in *Les Moutons de Panurge*, there is no hiding from one’s convictions. For the sake of the group, that’s a good thing.

*~ Robert Jackson Wood ~*

Robert Jackson Wood is a freelance writer living in Brooklyn. He holds a Ph.D in musicology from the CUNY Graduate Center.
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Behind every successful nonprofit organization is a team of dedicated volunteers. If you would like to join our team of volunteers, please give us a ring at (415) 278-9566 or email volunteer@sfcmp.org to discuss your interests and our available opportunities.
Composer Biography - John ZORN

Since the mid-1970s, New-York-born composer, performer, and record and concert producer John Zorn has been one of the most illustrious and charismatic figures associated with the avant-garde world of alternative, experimental, fusion-based, and free improvisational expression known as New York’s “downtown” music scene. More conventional musicians might lament the onslaught of industrial noises, commercial cacophonies, and electronic media-induced sounds that permeate our surroundings, but Zorn welcomes them as inspirational influences as well as extra-musical parameters in his pieces. Virtually all sounds, whatever their source, have come in principle to be fair game for his musical manipulation and incorporation.

Zorn’s compositional approach has been described as “kaleidoscopic” because of the way many of his pieces present rapidly changing flashes of unrelated and fleeting sound elements, gestures, and series of musical moments—all in a quick-paced flow of sonic information. The music, which can appear to leap from idea to idea and from idiom to idiom in distilled abstractions, without much in the way of development, can have a hyperkinetic air about it. By the dawn of the new millennium, when his reputation as the “bad boy” of the avant-garde was firmly established, his works had already appeared on more than sixty recordings.

– Abstracted from Neil W. Levin’s article in the Milken Archive / AllMusic.com
Frederic Rzewski began playing piano at age 5 and later attended Phillips Academy, Harvard and Princeton. In 1960, he went to Italy, a trip which was formative in his future musical development. In addition to studying with Luigi Dallapiccola, he began a career as a performer of new piano music, often with an improvisatory element. A few years later he was a co-founder of Musica Elettronica Viva with Alvin Curran and Richard Teitelbaum. Musica Elettronica Viva conceived music as a collective, collaborative process, with improvisation and live electronic instruments prominently featured. In 1977 Rzewski became Professor of Composition at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique in Liège, Belgium, then directed by Henri Pousseur.

Many of Rzewski’s works are inspired by secular and socio-historical themes, show a deep political conscience and feature improvisational elements. Some of his better-known works include *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!*, a set of virtuosic piano variations written as a companion piece to Beethoven’s *Diabelli Variations*; *Coming Together*, which is a setting of letters from Sam Melville, an inmate at Attica State Prison, at the time of the famous riots there (1971); *Les Moutons de Panurge*; and the *Antigone-Legend*, which features a principled opposition to the policies of the State. Nicolas Slonimsky (1993) says of him in Baker’s *Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*: “He is furthermore a granitically overpowering piano technician, capable of depositing huge boulders of sonoristic material across the keyboard without actually wrecking the instrument.”
Composer Biography - Don BYRON

An inspired eclectic, Byron has performed an array of musical styles with great success. Byron first attained a measure of notoriety for playing Klezmer, specifically the music of the late Mickey Katz. While the novelty of a black man playing Jewish music was enough to grab the attention of critics, it was Byron’s jazz-related work that ultimately made him a major figure. Byron was born and raised in New York City, the son of a mailman who also occasionally played bass in calypso bands, and a mother who dabbled on piano. As a child, Byron developed asthma; his doctor suggested he take up a wind instrument as therapy. Byron chose clarinet. His South Bronx neighborhood had a sizeable Jewish population, which partly explains his fascination with Klezmer.

Byron was encouraged by his parents to learn about all different kinds of music, from Leonard Bernstein to Dizzy Gillespie. Byron attended the New England Conservatory of Music, where he studied with George Russell. Byron moved from Boston back to New York in the mid-’80s, where he began playing with several of the city’s more prominent jazz avant-gardists, including David Murray, Craig Harris, and Hamiet Bluiett.

Source: Chris Kelsey’s biographical article on Allmusic.com
JUNO Award-winning composer Vivian Fung has a talent for combining idiosyncratic textures and styles into large-scale works, reflecting her multicultural background. Her work often assimilates disparate influences such as non-Western folk music, Brazilian rhythms, and visual inspirations.

Fung has a deep interest in exploring cultures through travel and research. She traveled to Southwest China in 2012 to study minority music and cultures in the Yunnan province, continuing research that previously inspired *Yunnan Folk Songs* (2011), commissioned by Fulcrum Point New Music in Chicago. As a composer whose trips often inspire her music, Fung has also explored diverse cultures in North Vietnam, Spain, and Indonesia.

Fung has enjoyed numerous high-profile projects in recent years as her music has continued to move in new directions. Many distinguished artists and ensembles around the world have embraced Fung’s music as part of the core repertoire. Fung has received numerous awards and grants, including the 2015 Jan V. Matejcek New Classical Music Award for achievement in new music from the Society of Composers.

Born in Edmonton, Canada, Fung began her composition studies with composer Violet Archer and received her doctorate from the Juilliard School in New York. She currently lives in California and is on the faculty of Santa Clara University. vivianfung.ca
Composer Biography - Ryan BROWN

Described as “nimble, expressive, ear-turning and strange in an accessible way” (Washington City Paper), Ryan Brown’s (b. 1979) music has been performed across the country and around the world by many excellent groups, performers, and presenters, including Kronos Quartet, GRAMMY-winners Roomful of Teeth, Crash Ensemble, Brooklyn Philharmonic, pianist Lisa Moore, JACK Quartet, California E.A.R. Unit, Paul Dresher Ensemble, and the NY Phil’s first Biennial.

Ryan has received an Emerging Composer Award from the Gerbode and Hewlett Foundations, and a Morton Gould Young Composer Award from ASCAP.

In addition to composing, Ryan is co-founder and Executive Director of Switchboard Music, a San Francisco-based non-profit presenting innovative and eclectic music from the Bay Area and beyond. Also active as both an electric guitarist and electric bassist, Ryan has been a featured performer in works by Terry Riley, Steve Reich, John Adams, and Steve Mackey, and has performed his music with the JACK Quartet and Brooklyn Philharmonic.

Ryan received his Ph.D. from Princeton University, and is also a graduate of California State University-Long Beach and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he serves as an Associate Dean.

ryanbrownmusic.com
Cellist Hannah Addario-Berry specializes in chamber music and solo repertoire and is passionately committed to performing music by living composers. In 2015, Hannah created Scordatura, an innovative project combining Zoltán Kodály’s monumental Sonata for Solo Cello with a series of newly commissioned works, which all share a unique altered tuning of the cello. An avid and versatile chamber musician, Hannah joined SFCMP in 2017. addarioberry.com

Jeff Anderle (clarinet) is a pioneer in the world of low reeds, helping to popularize the role of the modern clarinet and bass clarinet through his innovative and diverse performances, ensembles, and commissions. He is a founding member of both Splinter Reeds, the Bay Area’s first reed quintet, and REDSHIFT contemporary music ensemble, as well as a member of the Paul Dresher Electro/Acoustic Band. Jeff also is a founding co-director of Switchboard Music. jeffanderle.com

Oboist Kyle Bruckmann’s work as a composer and performer spans from the Western classical tradition into the frontiers of free jazz, electronic music and post-punk. With more than 60 recordings and a striking array of performance affiliations to his credit (Splinter Reeds, Quinteto Latino, the Stockton Symphony, sfSound, Eco Ensemble, and others) he has been acclaimed as “a modern day renaissance musician,” and “a seasoned improviser with impressive extended technique and peculiar artistic flair.” He teaches at UC Santa Cruz and UC Davis. kylebruckmann.com

Hailed as a “brilliant pianist” (Financial Times), Kate Campbell is at home with styles ranging from thorny modernism, to “sleek and spirited” minimalism, to indie classical. In addition to her work with SFCMP, Kate is the pianist
for the Eco Ensemble in Berkeley, and co-founder and pianist of the interdisciplinary duo KATES, which intertwines new solo piano music and new dance. She is also proud to be one of the founding organizers of the Omaha Under the Radar Festival, featuring new music, dance, and theater in her hometown of Omaha, Nebraska. Kate serves on the faculty of Mills College. katecampbellpiano.com

An avid and versatile chamber musician, Canadian cellist Hannah Addario-Berry performs regularly with many ensembles and festivals. She created Scordatura, an innovative project combining Zoltán Kodály’s monumental Sonata for Solo Cello with a series of newly commissioned works, all of which share a unique altered tuning of the cello. Hannah performed the program in 25 cities around the US and Canada and recorded Scordatura in early 2016. She lives with her husband in San Francisco, where she enjoys cooking, gardening, hiking, and teaching private lessons. addarioberry.com

For more than 30 years, harpist Karen Gottlieb has performed, toured and recorded with many notable ensembles including the San Francisco Symphony. She is the harpist for the Skywalker Recording Symphony, having recorded many major movies, TV and video game soundtracks. She has also served as principal harpist with the California Symphony and the Cabrillo Music Festival. In addition, Karen has worked with many celebrated popular culture artists including Ella Fitzgerald, Tony Bennett, Linda Ronstadt & Michael Feinstein. Karen especially enjoys her work in contemporary music. Karen joined SFCMP in 1990. kgharp.com

Roy Malan (violin) serves as solo violinist with the California Symphony and Opera Parallèle and was a longtime concertmaster and solo violinist for the San Francisco Ballet. The founding director of the Telluride Chamber Music Festival, he has an extensive career of performance domestically as well as in Canada, Mexico, Europe, Australia, and Africa to his credit. Educated at London’s
Royal Academy of Music under Yehudi Menuhin, he also attended Juilliard and the Curtis Institute, where he was a student of Ivan Galamian and Efrem Zimbalist having authored the latter’s biography. Roy currently serves on the faculty of the University of California, Santa Cruz, and plays locally with a string quartet, piano trio, and music festival engagements. Roy joined SFCMP in 1976.

David Tanenbaum has performed as a solo guitarist worldwide with many orchestras including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, and Vienna’s ORF orchestra. Many distinguished composers have written solos for David, including Hans Werner Henze’s guitar concerto An Eine Äolsharfe, Terry Riley’s first guitar piece Ascención, four works by Aaron Jay Kernis, and the last completed work by Lou Harrison. Tanenbaum has toured extensively with Steve Reich and Musicians, in Japan with Toru Takemitsu, and has had a long association with Ensemble Modern. David is the Chair of the SF Conservatory’s guitar department. David joined SFCMP in 2008. davidtanenbaum.com

In addition to his work with SFCMP, percussionist Nick Woodbury performs with and co-directs Mantra Percussion, a group dedicated to large-scale projects that redefine the traditional classical music concert format. Woodbury has appeared alongside the Bang on a Can All-Stars, with the Ensemble Modern Akademie, and Eco Ensemble. His work with contemporary music includes premiering new works by George Crumb, John Luther Adams, Michael Gordon and many others. New Music New College, Symphony Space in Manhattan. Nick joined SFCMP in 2015. nickwoodbury.com
Tonight’s Guest Musicians

Please join us in applauding the following guest musicians on tonight’s performance:

John Jaworski, percussion
Dana Jessen, bassoon
John Schott, electric guitar
Clio Tilton, viola

In addition, the following students at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music joined SFCMP on tonight’s performance, as part of SFCMP’s Side-by-Side Program:

Taylor Chan, percussion
Yangchunzi Duan, percussion
Margarita Pinkosz, keyboard
Tin Yi Wong, keyboard
Courtney McPhail, soprano
Marina Davis, mezzo soprano
Yihan Lou, voice
Wilton Huang, violin
Natalia Badziak, viola
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Performed by keyboard champions Eric Zivian and Sarah Cahill

Berkeley Piano Club
Thursday, February 1, 7:30pm
Saturday, February 3, 7:30pm
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Plus, world premieres from Chris Castro and Philip Acimovic!

www.leftcoastensemble.org
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We apologize for any errors or omissions; for corrections please contact director@sfcmp.org.

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A former subscriber, Harold Wollack, left the first bequest to help underwrite the ensemble’s concerts and programs. More recently, the ensemble has received a generous bequest from the estate of Jane LeRoux and Victor and Esta Wolfram.

Your bequest to the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players Legacy Circle will ensure the future of our music for lifetimes ahead. We thank the following individuals, who have arranged bequests to help support the ensemble’s future work:

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