



SAN FRANCISCO  
**CONTEMPORARY**  
MUSIC PLAYERS

## **SFCMP's 45th Season Pairs Major Works with Evocative New Compositions in Ambitious Series of Ten Events**

**Contact: Adam Fong - [info@sfcmp.org](mailto:info@sfcmp.org)**

San Francisco, July 24, 2015 – The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the West Coast's longest-standing new music ensemble, celebrates its 45th season with four ambitious programs "dedicated to exploring new spaces, both literal and metaphorical," plus a host of special events. Highlights include major works by Gérard Grisey, David Lang, Morton Feldman, and Louis Andriessen; a rare presentation of solo works by the composers Kaija Saariaho (Finland) and Jean-Baptiste Barrière (France); and a week long residency at Z Space, culminating in a special celebration of the ensemble's 45th anniversary.

SFCMP Artistic Director Steven Schick:

*X-scape is a season dedicated to exploring new spaces -- both literal and metaphorical. By replacing "X" we are able to look at important spaces: from **Songscape**, an examination of the nature of utterance and communication; to **Xeriscape**, which begs the question of the role of art in a discussion of climate change; to **Oscuroscape**, the nature of darkness. Along the way great works of new music will serve as our guides through the "selva oscura" of contemporary life.*

SFCMP's season is anchored by five major works from the late-20th and early-21st centuries:

**Songscape** (Oct. 21, special preview Oct. 20) features French spectral composer **Gérard Grisey's** magnificent final work, *Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil* (1998) (Four songs for crossing the threshold), a contemporary requiem full of "apocalyptic visions... reflective resignation and spectral stasis" (Guardian UK).

**Xeriscape** (Jan. 19) includes two seminal compositions: *Workers Union* (1975) by **Louis Andriessen**, whose flexible notation elicits a tense combination individual freedom and severe discipline reminiscent of political organizing; and *For Samuel Beckett* (1987) by **Morton Feldman**, recorded by SFCMP and released in 1993 on Newport Records, was the composer's final work, a challenging and sprawling masterpiece of subtle changes in harmony, timbre, and rhythm, over a duration of 45 minutes.

**Oscuroscope** (Mar. 15 & 17) features *darker* (2010), **David Lang's** hour-long work for "twelve solo strings," in which players' struggles to play softly are heavily amplified, creating an immersive and slowly evolving sound texture, to be complemented by lighting and video design.

**Starscape** (Mar. 16 & 18) concludes the SFCMP season with the hour-long masterwork for six percussionists placed around the audience, *Le Noir de l'Étoile* (1989-90) by **Gérard Grisey**. The piece was inspired by the discovery, in the late 1960s, of periodic and rapidly varying radio signals emitting from the residue of a long-ago supernova explosion.

### **Special Events**

SFCMP will also offer four special events to complement the season's ambitious programming:

- Artistic Director and Conductor Steven Schick will lead a **preview of Grisey's *Quatre chants***, free for students and subscribers, on the evening prior to the Songscape concert, presented in partnership with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music
- A rare presentation of solo works by the composers **Kaija Saariaho** (Finland) and **Jean-Baptiste Barrière** (France) at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco, exhibiting their mastery of both music and multimedia
- A free and participatory community event, ***Unsilent Night* by Phil Kline**, bringing contemporary music and holiday caroling together for an avant-garde street promenade in which the audience becomes the performer
- A **special celebration** to honor the organization's 45th anniversary, and the conclusion of its week-long residency at Z Space in San Francisco (March 15 - 19, 2016).

### **Concert and Event Dates and Details**

#### **Songscape**

**Wednesday, October 21, 2015**

**6:30 pm Panel Discussion / 7:30 pm Concert**

**San Francisco Conservatory of Music, San Francisco**

Songscape examines the nature of utterance. How does an individual find her voice; how does she learn to understand others as language changes? For insight we'll listen to David Lang's quotations of the character of death in Schubert art song and to Lee Hyla's conjecture of what Etruscan might sound like as played through modern reed instruments. Gérard Grisey's magnificent final work, *Quatre Chants*, is a reliquary and an expressive catharsis.

- *Death Speaks* by David Lang (Soprano, Violin, Guitar, Piano)
- *We Speak Etruscan* by Lee Hyla (Baritone Saxophone, Bass Clarinet)
- Improvisation by Kyle Bruckmann & Ken Ueno
- *Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil* by Gérard Grisey (Soprano Solo and Fifteen Instruments)
  - Special Guest Performer: Alice Teyssier, soprano

\*\* Grisey Preview - Tuesday, October 20, SF Conservatory of Music, free for subscribers & students

*Special Event*

**Barrière & Saariaho**

**Saturday, October 24, 2015**

**6:30 pm Panel Discussion / 7:30 pm Concert**

**Jewish Community Center of San Francisco**

Two contemporary masters of multi-media, the composers Kaija Saariaho and Jean-Baptiste Barrière, are visiting the Bay Area in the 2015. SFCMP takes a close look at their most intimate works – solo pieces for instruments, electronics and (sometimes) video. From the lyrical to the visceral, these Saariaho and Barrière works run the gamut of sounds and emotions.

- *Six Japanese Gardens* by Kaija Saariaho (Solo percussion with electronics)
- On-stage interview with Jean-Baptiste Barrière
- *Violance* by Jean-Baptiste Barrière (Solo violin with electronics and video)
- At Intermission: On-stage interview with Kaija Saariaho
- *NoaNoa* by Kaija Saariaho (Solo flute with electronics and video)
- *Time Dust* by Jean-Baptiste Barrière (Solo percussion with electronics and video)

*Special Event*

**Unsilent Night**

**Saturday, December 19, 2015**

**Location TBA**

This free and participatory community event will be linked to the “Unsilent Night” celebrations around the world. The original composition by Phil Kline, written specifically to be heard outdoors in the month of December, takes the form of a street promenade in which the audience becomes the performer. Each participant plays one of four tracks of music from their own boombox, phone, or anything that amplifies music, together comprising Unsilent Night. Our ensemble will walk a carefully chosen route through San Francisco, creating a unique mobile sound sculpture.

**Xeriscape**

**Tuesday, January 19, 2016**

**6:30 pm Panel Discussion / 7:30 pm Concert**

**San Francisco Conservatory of Music, San Francisco**

Xeriscape (Xeri from Greek ξηρός for dry) invokes climate change. California's wells and reservoirs are drying; the ice fields in the Arctic are shrinking; deserts of all kinds are growing. Xeriscape poses the question: is there a cultural counterpart to climate change? Are there important artistic statements that resonate in the new arid spaces? Or are we caught, as Beckett writes, in the desolate space “*entre le galet et la mer?*”

- *La Forma dello Spazio* by Zosha DiCastrì (Flute, Clarinet, Piano, Violin, Cello)
- *Workers Union* by Louis Andriessen
- *For Samuel Beckett* by Morton Feldman

**Oscuroscape**

**Tuesday, March 15, 2016 & Thursday, March 17, 2016**

**6:30 pm Panel Discussion / 7:30 pm Concert**

**Z Space, San Francisco**

David Lang's introspectively ecstatic piece *darker* takes a long time to change very little. Over the course of an hour a very active string orchestra plays music that gets a little darker – not a lot, just a little. A film by visual artist Suzanne Bocanegra heightens the darkening. The result is hypnotic and moving.

- *warmth* by David Lang (electric guitar duet)
- *darker* by David Lang (12 strings)

### **Starscape**

**Wednesday, March 16, 2016 & Friday, March 18, 2016**

**6:30 pm Panel Discussion / 7:30 pm Concert**

**Z Space, San Francisco**

One of the greatest statements in the percussion repertoire, Gérard Grisey's *Le Noir d'étoile* takes both its inspiration and sound sources from recordings made of pulsars. These rhythmic phenomena, arriving from enormous distances, make our world come alive with pulsations. Looking inward rather than outward, Marianthi Papalexandri-Alexandri's *kein thema* looks at the smallest of sounds and inspirations – the small brushing sounds of skin on a temple block, the rhythmic swoop of a marble rolling – and makes chamber music from them.

- *kein thema* by Marianthi Papalexandri-Alexandri (three percussionists)
- *Le Noir de l'Étoile* by Gérard Grisey (six percussionists)

### *Special Event*

**Friday, March 19, 2016 – 45th Anniversary Celebration**

**Z Space, San Francisco**

Details to be announced

### **Tickets**

**All tickets available online at [sfcmp.org](http://sfcmp.org)**

*Subscriptions now available* - \$150

Includes premium seating at five ticketed concerts at a 15% discount, free ticket exchange, plus free admission to the Grisey Preview (Oct. 20)

*Single Tickets on sale September 1, 2015*

\$35 Premium Seating, \$25 General, \$15 Student w/ ID

*Grisey Preview:* \$10 at the door, students free with ID, free for subscribers

### **About the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players**

Led by Artistic Director Steven Schick, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players occupies an important place in the national cultural landscape. One of the most longstanding, continually performing new music ensembles in the country, SFCMP performs innovative and exceptional music for a wide spectrum of arts and music enthusiasts. Through performances, collaborative projects, commissions, and educational outreach activities, SFCMP aims to give audience members and friends opportunities to discover musical repertoire that is new to them – and to use these experiences as ways to better understand, interact with, and enjoy their lives and our world.

### **About Steven Schick**

Percussionist, conductor, and author, Steven Schick was raised in an Iowa farming family. For forty years he has championed contemporary music by commissioning or premiering more than 150 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 in addition to serving as SFCMP's Artistic Director. In 2012 he became the first Artist-in-Residence with the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). Schick founded and is currently 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 this season with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Nova Chamber Ensemble and the Asko/Schönberg Ensemble. Schick was music director of the 2015 Ojai Festival. Among his acclaimed publications are a book, "The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams," and numerous recordings of contemporary percussion music including a three-CD set of the complete percussion music of Iannis Xenakis (Mode). Mode released a companion recording on DVD of the early percussion music of Karlheinz Stockhausen in September of 2014. Steven Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego. He was named Artistic Director of SFCMP in 2011.

Biographies of SFCMP ensemble members can be accessed online at:

**<http://sfcmp.org/category/players>.**