



Sunday, January 25, 2015, 7pm  
Hertz Hall

# San Francisco Contemporary Music Players

Steven Schick, *Artistic Director*

## *Project TenFourteen*

### PROGRAM

Agata Zubel (b. 1978)    where to\* (2014)  
*World Première*

Steven Schick, *conductor*  
Agata Zubel, *soprano*  
Tod Brody, *flute*  
Peter Josheff, *clarinet*  
Dale Wolford, *saxophone*  
Brad Hogarth, *trumpet*  
Dave Ridge, *trombone*  
Peter Wahrhaftig, *tuba*  
Nick Woodbury, *percussion*  
Richard Worn, *double bass*

Harrison Birtwistle (b. 1934)    Variations from the Golden Mountain (2014)  
*United States Première*

Nicolas Hodges, *piano*

Birtwistle    The Axe Manual (2000)

Nicolas Hodges, *piano*  
Steven Schick, *percussion*

INTERMISSION

PROGRAM

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Birtwistle Gigue Machine (2011)

Nicolas Hodges, *piano*

Du Yun (b. 1977) Quatrain: Slow Portraits iii\* (2014)  
*World Première*

Kyle Bruckmann, *oboe*

Alicia Telford, *horn*

William Winant, *percussion*

David Tanenbaum, *guitar*

Meredith Clark, *harp*

Jennifer Curtis, *violin*

Stephen Harrison, *cello*

*\* Project TenFourteen commission*

*Project TenFourteen is series of four programs featuring world premières simultaneously commissioned from ten distinctive composers, all challenged to reflect upon and address the human condition, common to us all.*

*Project TenFourteen is dedicated to the memory and celebration of Lee Hyla.*

*Agata Zubeł's participation in this concert is supported, in part, by the Polish Cultural Institute.*

*Audio streams of the TenFourteen commissioned works will be available on [www.sfcmp.org](http://www.sfcmp.org) approximately two weeks after the concert. Visit [tenfourteen.com](http://tenfourteen.com) for further exploration of archival content and evolving commentary stimulated by Project TenFourteen.*

*Cal Performances' 2014–2015 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*

## SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS

Tod Brody	<i>flute</i>
Kyle Bruckmann	<i>oboe</i>
Sarah Rathke	<i>oboe</i>
Jeff Anderle	<i>clarinet</i>
Peter Josheff	<i>clarinet</i>
Bill Kalinkos	<i>clarinet</i>
Lawrence Ragent	<i>horn</i>
Hall Goff	<i>trombone</i>
Peter Wahrhaftig	<i>tuba</i>
Karen Gottlieb	<i>harp</i>
David Tanenbaum	<i>guitar</i>
Kate Campbell	<i>piano</i>
William Winant	<i>percussion</i>
Daniel Kennedy	<i>percussion</i>
Christopher Froh	<i>percussion</i>
Roy Malan	<i>violin</i>
Graeme Jennings	<i>violin</i>
Susan Freier	<i>violin</i>
Nanci Severance	<i>viola</i>
Stephen Harrison	<i>cello</i>
Richard Worn	<i>bass</i>
Steven Schick	<i>Artistic Director</i>
Rozella Kennedy	<i>Executive Director</i>
Adam Fong	<i>Project Manager</i>
Luis Escareño	<i>Administrative Manager</i>
Jon Yu	<i>Production Manager</i>
Brenna Noonan	<i>Media Coordinator</i>
Travis Andrews & Andrew Meyerson	<i>Ministers of Fun</i>

**W**HY SHOULD WE MAKE new music when there is so much great older music?

I have been asked this question more than once, usually following the première of a challenging new work. The knee-jerk response is that exploration is good in any field, so why not also in music?. However, that answer rings false. With every innovation in technology, commerce, or transportation, the future is created and the past is jettisoned. But as we musicians make new music, we hang on to the past. Doctors no longer use leeches, but art lovers still gain much from Beethoven.

At the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, we acknowledge the unique historical power of music by weaving important works from the recent past among the premières of our TenFourteen season. In our season-opening concert, we heard an early piano piece of George Crumb, and later in the year, we will present modernist masterpieces by Berio, Nono, and Varèse. In tonight's concert, we will hear three recent works by the masterful Harrison Birtwistle. Birtwistle's strong sense of ritual and his fascination with slowly morphing rhythmic ostinatos, often makes his music sound more recent than it really is. I hope his music will provide a meaningful frame for the premières by Du Yun and Agata Zubel.

At best, the present evocatively folds evocatively back on the past. Perhaps Birtwistle's pioneering ideas will still sound current, and maybe Du Yun and Agata Zubel, to the extent that they are rooted in fertile history, will carry with them traces of past lives. This brings us to one reason I care about new music: The past is vivid and alive in my life. Therefore, it seems like the least we can do for future generations is to make, today, the music that will become the historically powerful art of the future.

*Steven Schick*

**Agata Zubel (b. 1978)**  
**where to (2014)**

Polish composer Agata Zubel was a percussionist before concentrating, as a performer, on voice. Both have led her to infuse her compositions with exoticisms of sound that could emerge only from the experience of its creation. The colorful world of the percussion battery opened Zubel's imagination to extended possibilities of traditionally constrained instruments, allowing her to conceive an extended range of acoustic imagery for, for example, violin, flute, chamber ensemble, orchestra.

In *where to*, a contrabass aria establishes a rhythmic profile and articulative range (from unpitched to pitched, percussive to melodic) that informs the music for the ensemble. This coalesces into asymmetrical, nervous rhythmic unisons, leavened by silence. Aggressive music broadly alternates with sustained contrapuntal passages. Both come together in chaotic intensity, or dissipate into near silence. The end of the piece—a new beginning—is a *deus ex machina*, a melismatic wordless soprano luring the wind instruments back to mysterious lyricism.

About her work, Zubel writes: "Culture developed at various paces on different continents, in different periods and directions. People met other people, and after that their world—knowledge, emotions, and music—could never be the same. Man's return to the origins has never been possible, and yet those origins are something that man has always hoped to understand. In this way, synergy gives rise to deconstruction, and development makes it possible to look sideways...and back. This is also the case with my music, which, as it develops in time, adds new seconds while hoping to understand the minutes that came before."

**Harrison Birtwistle (b. 1934)**  
**Variations on the Golden Mountain (2014)**  
**The Axe Manual (2000)**  
**Gigue Machine (2011)**

One of the world's great composers, Sir Harrison Birtwistle is known for his unparalleled dramatic sense, not only in his acclaimed, innovative operatic works but also in his instrumental music. A major preoccupation of his aesthetic philosophy is the possibility of reversing, deleting, foreshortening, lengthening, and otherwise manipulating our perception of passing time. Several solo piano works, from *Précis* (1960) through the significant *Harrison's Clocks* (1998) and *Gigue Machine* (2011), explore this with special focus. *Gigue Machine* and *Variations from the Golden Mountain* (2014) were both composed for the phenomenal English pianist Nicolas Hodges.

*The Axe Manual* (2000) was composed for pianist Emanuel Ax and percussionist Evelyn Glennie. Composed in a fast-slow-fast arch form, it combines percussion and piano into a metainstrument. Phrases and passages for piano with vibraphone or marimba fuse into new tone colors unavailable from the individual instruments; the piano's essentially percussive nature is enhanced in combination with unpitched drums; and the complex overtones of pitched metallic percussion amplify the piano's metallic strings and frame.

*Gigue Machine's* title—like many of Birtwistle's—refers to the friction between inexorable mechanical time versus human, flexible, dance-oriented time. Correspondences and divergences can be heard on several levels: concurrent contrasting tempos locally, but also stylistically different swaths of music that can be apprehended by mentally “zooming out,” taking in the large picture. Hodges premiered *Variations from the Golden Mountain* just this past September at Wigmore Hall in London. The “Golden Mountain” is that Parnassus of keyboard works, Bach's “Goldberg” Variations. Although, at nine minutes, Birtwistle's piece doesn't pretend to the comprehensive scope of Bach's, its alternation of contrasting episodes and

its unhurried, but compressed and focused, exploration of highly constrained musical material are philosophically modeled on Bach's approach. In its layering of independent (but related) lines in different speeds, we can readily hear in *Golden Mountain* (note in particular its concluding episode) a kinship with *Gigue Machine*.

**Du Yun (b. 1977)**  
**Quatrain: Slow Portraits iii (2014)**

All of Du Yun's work connects to an operatic, theatrical sensibility. Her *Quatrain: Slow Portraits iii*, commissioned for Project TenFourteen, continues a series that began as a sound installation accompanying visual artist David Michalek's *Portraits in Dramatic Time* for the 2011 Lincoln Center Festival. Du Yun's *Slow Portraits* pieces, which can be performed with or without film, are musical analogs of Michalek's high-resolution, cinema-sized projections of super slow motion images in which actors' small physical gestures are amplified by their extension in time. The composer's aim in *Quatrain* is “to investigate how each rhyme of the aural phrase translates to a physical gesture; and how a group of microscopic kinesics form their larger-than-life impact.... The creator, the performers, the narrative, and the scenery have become seductress, to lure the audience into another world.”

*Quatrain* is essentially four “stanzas,” each preceded by an interlude, the stanzas suggesting a series of variations. The sonic reality of the musical gestures requires the ensemble to react as one vibrant organism, even beyond traditional chamber music. Individual virtuosity is required to create phrases of clear rhythm and pitch, and also to negotiate glissandi, microtones, and semi-improvised music that blurs and defamiliarizes, like a well-known visual image, taken via technology out of its wonted context, destabilized and strange. With a coming-together of the ensemble near the end of the piece, marked “As if a wave,” comes a shock, like recognition.

*Robert Kirzinger*



The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players (SFCMP), an ensemble of highly skilled musicians, performs innovative new music. We nourish the creation and dissemination of new work through high-quality musical performances, commissions, and community outreach. We promote the music of composers from across cultures and stylistic traditions who are creating a vast and vital 21st-century musical language. We seek to share these experiences with as many people as possible, both in and outside of traditional concert settings.

SFCMP was founded by Jean-Louis LeRoux, Marcella DeCray, and Charles Boone as “Bring Your Own Pillow” on March 25, 1971, and incorporated as a nonprofit on August 14, 1974. Throughout its history, SFCMP has been led by six Artistic Directors and six Executive Directors with continuous authorization, support and fiscal oversight by a board of directors.

In addition to programmatic innovation, our performances are rooted in artistic virtuosity. Our 22 core SF Contemporary Music Players are among the Bay Area’s leading musicians and educators. They are active as soloists and chamber musicians and leaders of several dynamic performance groups in California and beyond.

SFCMP is the longest standing, continuously performing new music ensemble outside the East Coast. Over its 43 seasons, SFCMP’s work has greatly contributed to the art form and the new music sector. We have performed more than 1,200 new works by 560 composers. Nearly 150 of these have been premières, and we have commissioned more than 80 new

works by composers from around the world. SFCMP has been presented by leading cultural festivals and concert series in the San Francisco Bay Area and around the country.



Andrzej Georgiev

**Agata Zubel**, born 1978 in Wrocław, Poland, is a Polish composer and singer. Zubel is a graduate of Wrocław’s Karol Szymanowski High School of Music, where she studied percussion and music theory, and the Karol Lipiński University of Music,

where she studied composition with Jan Wichrowski. She is a member of the Youth Circle of the Polish Composers’ Union and a recipient of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage scholarship. In 2013, she was honored by the International Music Council International Rostrum of Composers with Best Composition Title for *Not I*, which she wrote for soprano, instrumental ensemble, and electronics. Currently, she teaches at the Academy of Music in Wrocław, where she received her Ph.D. in musical arts.



Hanya Chiklali/ArenaPAL

**Harrison Birtwistle** was born in Accrington in the north of England in 1934, and studied clarinet and composition at the Royal Manchester College of Music, making contact with a highly talented group of contemporaries, including Peter

Maxwell Davies, Alexander Goehr, John Ogdon, and Elgar Howarth. In the mid-1960s, his opera *Punch and Judy*, together with *Verses for Ensembles* and *The Triumph of Time*, firmly established Birtwistle as a leading voice in British music. His lyric tragedy *The Mask of Orpheus* was staged by English National Opera in 1986. Large-scale works in the following

decade included the operas *Gawain* and *The Second Mrs. Kong*, the concertos *Endless Parade* for trumpet and *Antiphonies* for piano, and the orchestral score *Earth Dances*. Works that premiered in the past decade include *The Minotaur*, written for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and his violin concerto for Christian Tetzlaff and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Birtwistle's 80th birthday year in 2014 saw the premiere of *Responses* for piano and orchestra, touring internationally with Pierre-Laurent Aimard as soloist. His many honors include the Grawemeyer Award for *The Mask of Orpheus*, the Siemens Prize, and being made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. He was knighted in 1988 and was made a Companion of Honour in 2001. He was Henry Purcell Professor of Music at King's College London and is currently Director of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Harrison Birtwistle is published by Boosey & Hawkes.



**Du Yun**, born and raised in Shanghai, China, is a composer, performer and performance artist who practices her works at an artistic crossroads of orchestral, chamber music, opera, theater, cabaret, storytelling, pop music, visual arts,

and noise. She has received commissions from the Seattle Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Mann Center for the Performing Arts, Whitney Museum, Berkeley Symphony, Fromm Foundation, Chamber Music America, Festivals für Neue Musik und aktuelle Kultur (Switzerland), and ICE, among others. Selected venues at which performances of her work have taken place include Festival d'Avignon, Ultima Norway, Salle Playel Paris, Darmstadt, Musica Nova Helsinki, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln

Center, RedCat, Kimmel Center, Shanghai Symphony, Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, and Philharmonie Luxembourg. Her visual artworks have been shown at the Guangzhou Art Triennial, National Academy Museum (United States), Sharjah Biennial (UAE), Auckland Triennial (New Zealand), and Ullens Art Center (Beijing).



Born in London and now based in Germany, where he is a professor at the Musikhochschule Stuttgart, **Nicolas Hodges** approaches repertoire from the Classical era to the present with the same questing spirit. Mr. Hodges has performed as concerto soloist

with the major orchestras of the United States and Europe, working with many of the world's most acclaimed conductors. Closely associated with works of Elliott Carter, Beat Furrer, and Thomas Adès, he has premiered and recorded pieces written for him by many composers, including Georges Aperghis, Harrison Birtwistle, Pascal Dusapin, Luca Francesconi, Isabel Mundry, Wolfgang Rihm, Rebecca Saunders, and Salvatore Sciarrino. He has performed as a recitalist in such venues as Carnegie Hall, IRCAM, and Wigmore Hall, and at festivals including the BBC Proms, the Lucerne Festival, and Tanglewood. He collaborates regularly with the Arditti Quartet, Adrian Brendel, Colin Currie, Ilya Gringolts, Anssi Karttunen, and as a member of the Trio Accanto. Highlights of the 2014–2015 season are the world premiere of Birtwistle's *Variations from the Golden Mountain*; an SWR commissioned work by Simon Steen-Andersen with SWR Sinfonieorchester Freiburg Baden-Baden; and a world premiere of a new Ivo Nilsson work with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.



Percussionist, conductor, and author **Steven Schick** was born in Iowa and raised in a farming family. For 40 years, he has championed contemporary music by commissioning or premiering more than 150 new works. He was the

founder 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). Mr. 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. Mr. 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. Mr. Schick will be music director of the 2015 Ojai

Festival. Among his acclaimed publications is 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 Xenakis (Mode). Mode also released a companion recording on DVD of the early percussion music of Karlheinz Stockhausen in September 2014.

Mr. Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music at UC San Diego. He was named Artistic Director of SFCMP in 2011.

SFCMP’s 2014–2015 season is made possible by the following institutions, among others: The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, The Amphion Foundation, The Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, The Instituto Italiano de Cultura of San Francisco, The James Irvine Foundation’s Exploring Engagement Fund, The Jebediah Foundation, The Bernard Osher Foundation, Polish Cultural Institute New York, San Francisco Grants for the Arts, The Ross McKee Foundation, The Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, WESTAF, the Western States Arts Federation, and the National Endowment for the Arts, and The Zellerbach Family Foundation, as well as the essential generosity of individuals who make a tax-deductible contribution to our 501(c)3 organization, or who provide volunteer and/or in-kind support. Find out more at [sfcmp.org/support](http://sfcmp.org/support). Thank you!