



Sunday, May 6, 2018, 5pm
Zellerbach Playhouse

eco ensemble
David Milnes, conductor

PROGRAM

Martin Matalon in Conversation
with Cal Performances Executive and Artistic Director Matías Tarnopolsky

PAUSE

Martin Matalon, *Foxtrot Delirium* (2015)
Music for the film *Die Austernprinzessin (The Oyster Princess)* by Ernst Lubitsch
United States Premiere

Tod Brody, *flute, bass flute*
Peter Josheff, *clarinet, contrabass clarinet*
David Granger, *bassoon, contrabassoon*
Alicia Telford, *horn*
Brad Hogarth, *trumpet*
Brendan Lai Tong, *trombone*
Loren Mach, *percussion*
Haruka Fujii, *percussion*
Dan Levitan, *harp*
Kate Campbell, *piano*
Hrabba Atladottir, *violin*
Helen Newby, *cello*

Jeremy Wagner, *technical direction*

*Special thanks to the University of California, Berkeley Department of Music
and the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies (CNMAT).*

eco ensemble

Richard Andrews, *executive director*
Amadeus Regucera, *production director*

ARTISTIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Edmund Campion, David Milnes,
Matías Tarnopolsky, Cindy Cox, Franck Bedrossian

Cal Performances' 2017–18 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Foxtrot Delirium was commissioned by the Ars Nova instrumental ensemble and premiered at the Festival Lux on January 20, 2015 at the Scène nationale de Valence, France under the direction of Philippe Nahon. This performance by the eco ensemble under the direction of David Milnes is the United States premiere.

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Martin Matalon on *Foxtrot Delirium*

Martin, tell us why you chose to compose for Ernst Lubitsch's *Die Austernprinzessin* (*The Oyster Princess*).

This film spoke to me for a number of reasons. Firstly, because it is, above all, highly musical in the sense that everything is rhythm: the ideas and the situations swiftly follow each other, everything seems weightless, as if propelled by wit and lightness. Some scenes and décors are eminently choreographic. There is an enormous sense of exactitude and precision in the gestures and situations.... All of these factors (rhythm, dynamics, weightlessness, accuracy, precision...) are possible musical paths.

On several occasions, you have celebrated the cinema's heritage. From an artistic point of view, what are you looking for in the particular genre of the "cinema-concert"?

The "cinema-concert" is capable of making a "fixed" medium come alive. It brings out an additional and extraordinarily interesting layer, adding musical and spatial dimensions to the images, which does not exist in a silent movie with pre-recorded music. It's a medium that allows a different reading of the film, a new interpretation...and, somewhere, if the alchemy is successful, it refreshes it and makes it contemporary.

From my point of view, living with the work of *the other* for seven or eight months—thinking and working on each image, each scene, each sequence, and in an intense and prolonged way, makes their interests one's own, and this appro-

priation is very interesting and enriching. In the case of this film, swiftness and weightlessness take pride of place as some sort of crystallization of humor, which turned out to be a particularly interesting challenge.

***Foxtrot Delirium* is an independent creation on your part. Have you been able to listen to other compositions proposed for this film since its premiere in 1919? Or did you begin with an entirely blank page?**

The first time I saw the film, it was accompanied by music. The style of music was very different from mine and I did not get much from it apart from the lightness it gave off. In other words, one can say that I started with an entirely blank page. I should add that this is the fifth film for which I've written music, so my previous experiences did help me get to the heart of things.

Does the genre of comedy open the way to greater freedom of writing? Maybe even more whimsy? Does it allow you to experiment with new relationships between sound and image?

I think that comedy and humor certainly have, somewhere, a liberating effect when it comes to musical writing.... It's a tone that forces us to find solutions to problems that we are not used to tackling as composers. Likewise, taking on the problem of the *other*, which we spoke of earlier, places us in situations that we did not necessarily imagine. In my music, there is a lot of humor; it's something very important to me.

Music is not something meaningful, in that you cannot explain things with music as you do with words. How do you translate humor? There is something about humor that depends on a kind of quickness, an agility. In the silent films of the 1920s and '30s, the timing is generally very slow because it was necessary to be perfectly explicit. In *The Oyster Princess*, on the contrary, everything circulates, everything is very mobile. There is an extreme speed, and we're not bored, not even for a second. Ernst Lubitsch poses a problem related to speed and

weightlessness, the two elements on which he establishes his flagrantly humorous situations. It's from this frantic rhythm that my music develops, with vivacious interactions between the instruments and images that give rise to a swirl of musical situations.

In an arrangement that is typical of the cinema-concert—the orchestra being onstage in front of the screen—do the electronics play a particular role? Does it become a way to deal with, as a whole, the space between what's happening on and off-screen?

In my music, the electronics are often an extension of the instruments but they can also take on their independence. What matters is that the two form a completely unified part. The electronics can influence the space: we are no longer in a frontal but multidimensional space; the audience is surrounded by sound. The electronics also let us modify the timbre, the temporality, and offers us the possibility of superimposing different sound layers. In this piece, the electronics have their rightful place: a structuring role in the space that supplements and expands the instruments, but is also a very important tool in the development of the artistic material.... The image, the acoustic sound of the ensemble, and the electronics immerse the film in a world of sound. Ideally, the film and the music merge into a single entity, a captivating sonic and visual environment for the audience.

What are your thoughts on the cinema-concert today? Are you simply revisiting the genre or is it a genuine transformation of an effervescent genre in the era of silent cinema?

I think that there is a genuine renewal, in the sense that there is a reinterpretation, a “modernization” of these classic films. If the alchemy is successful, it's a great opportunity to see them again. There are many silent film masterpieces and it's very important not to let them die but to give them new life. I didn't know Lubitsch's film before working on it. Like Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, which I worked on a few years ago,

I only saw an abridged version that circulated in the 1970s and '80s—totally different from the original. Since then, the film has been restored. There is, in certain silent films, an incredible inventiveness. For me, Lubitsch's *The Oyster Princess* is a little pearl, a little masterpiece. There is a great deal of finesse in the directing; the film is suffused with creativity, lightness, and humor.... I'm thrilled to have been able to work on this film.

In this friendly relationship with the film, which sequence are you most attached to?

There aren't really any sequences that I prefer. In general, I like to think of the work as a whole. There are scenes that I find more successful than others, some images that I find magnificent, like the foxtrot scene, where the dance spreads like an epidemic! But I have no particular attachment to a scene. I truly enjoy the work as a whole.

—translated from the French
by Amadeus Regucera



Dieder Olivré

Born in Buenos Aires in 1958, **Martin Matalon** received his bachelor's degree in composition from the Boston Conservatory of Music in 1984, and his master's degree from the

Juilliard School of Music in 1986. In 1989, having begun conducting studies with Jacques-Louis Monod, he founded Music Mobile, a New York-based ensemble devoted to contemporary music.

Among his awards, Matalon has received the Grand Prix des Lycéens; a Guggenheim fellowship; a Fulbright scholarship; awards from the Académie des Beaux-Arts and the city of Barcelona; and the Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

In 1993, having settled in Paris, Matalon collaborated for the first time with IRCAM and worked on *La Rosa profunda*, music for an exhibition at the Pompidou Centre on the “Universe of Borges.” The following year, IRCAM

commissioned a new score for the restored version of Fritz Lang's silent film *Metropolis*. After that major project, Matalon turned to the universe of Luis Buñuel, writing scores for three legendary surrealist films by the Spanish director: *Las Siete vidas de un gato* (1996), for *Un Chien Andalou* (1929); *Le Scorpion* (2001) for *L'Age d'Or* (1930); and *Traces II (La cabra)* (2005) for *Las Hurdes: Tierra Sin Pan* (1933). His catalogue also includes a large number of chamber and orchestral works, including *Otras Ficciones* and *Lignes de fuite* for large orchestra, *del matiz al color* for cello octet, and *Monedas de hierro* for ensemble and electronics, as well as pieces written for a large spectrum of different genres: musical tales, choreographic works, installations, music with text, musical theater, and music with mimes.

Begun in 1997, the series of *Trames*, borderline works between solo concerto writing and chamber music, and the series of *Traces*, conceived for solo instruments and real-time processing, constitutes a sort of compositional diary for their composer, forming an important part of his catalogue.

Matalon has written for, among others, the Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre Philharmonique, Orchestre National de Lorraine, Orquesta de Barcelona y Catalunya, the Ensemble Intercontemporain, Barcelona 216, Les Percussions de Strasbourg, Court-circuit, Ensemble Modern, and Musik-Fabrik.

Matalon conducts regularly and has taught at McGill University, the summer academy at IRCAM (2000 and 2003), and the Centre Acanthes (2000 and 2004). He was a Regents lecturer at UC Berkeley in 2007.

Martin Matalon was composer-in-residence with the Orchestre National de Lorraine and the Arsenal de Metz, as well as at the electronic studios of La Muse en Circuit (2005–09).

eco ensemble, under the direction of David Milnes, is a new group of prominent Bay Area musicians who are passionate about exploring and performing contemporary works. Its mission is to enrich and serve the Bay Area's cultural life through the creation, performance,

and dissemination of new music by composers from Berkeley and around the world. Praised as a "dream team of local musicians who embody a high point in the Bay Area's vibrant contemporary music scene" by the *New York Times*, eco ensemble has been featured at music festivals such as the Festival of New American Music and the Venice Biennale and has worked closely with renowned composers including Kaija Saariaho, Beat Furrer, Philippe Leroux, George Lewis, Erin Gee, and Ivan Fedele.

The group is the ensemble-in-residence at UC Berkeley's Department of Music and the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies (CNMAT). As the university's principal performance outlet for performers and composers of new music, eco ensemble commissions and premieres works from UC Berkeley composers. Members of the ensemble work extensively with undergraduate and graduate musicians in new-music studies and are developing a comprehensive program for new-music performance.

eco ensemble's unique collaboration with CNMAT inspires works that are informed by contemporary explorations into the intersection between science and music. The ensemble seeks to expand the possibilities for new music by working with CNMAT faculty, students, and researchers to develop new instruments, new applications of technologies for composition and performance, and new modes of expression. With a focus on education for both experienced audiences and novices, eco ensemble's public outreach efforts include lectures, demonstrations, workshops, and composer residencies.



Kathleen Karn

David Milnes serves as music director of the eco ensemble, Berkeley's in-residence professional new-music ensemble, as well as (since 1996) music director of the UC Berkeley Symphony Orchestra.

In his early years, he studied piano, organ, clarinet, cello, and voice, and briefly entertained a career as a jazz pianist, appearing with Chuck Mangione, Gene Krupa, Billy Taylor, and John Pizzarelli. After receiving

advanced degrees in conducting from SUNY Stony Brook and the Yale School of Music, and studying with Otto Werner Muller, Herbert Blomstedt, Erich Leinsdorf, and Leonard Bernstein, Milnes won the prestigious Exxon Assistant Conductor position with the San Francisco Symphony, where he also served as music director of the acclaimed San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra (which he led on its first European tour in 1986). Milnes has conducted frequently in Russia and the Baltics, serving as music director of the Riga Independent Opera Company and as a principal guest conductor of the Latvian National Symphony. Recent engagements include appearances at the MANCA Festival in Nice, France, with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Nice; in Mexico, at the Festival “El Callejón del Ruido” with the Guanajuato Symphony Orchestra; and in Russia, with the Novosibirsk Symphony Orchestra. He has collaborated in performances with Frederica von Stade, Dawn Upshaw, Bill T. Jones, Paul Hillier, James Newton, David Starobin, and Chanticleer, and appeared at the Santa Fe, Tanglewood, Aspen, and Monadnock music festivals. A dedicated proponent of new music, from 2002 to 2009 Milnes was music director of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, with whom he commissioned and premiered many new works from around the world. He has made recordings of music by John Anthony Lennon, James Newton, Edmund Campion, Jorge Liderman, and Pablo Ortiz.

The **Center for New Music and Audio Technologies** (CNMAT) houses a dynamic group of educational, performance, and research programs focused on the creative interaction between new music and emerging technologies. CNMAT combines technical, science-based research with a humanistic critical perspective

and practical investigation into the process and possibility for the creation of new music. At CNMAT, the laboratory and stage merge to challenge the boundaries of present-day music-making. In addition to three decades of published research, CNMAT continues to support the software tools that it has pioneered since its founding in the late 1980s. CNMAT collaborates with all of UC Berkeley’s academic disciplines and is dedicated to the study or creative use of sound.

CNMAT was conceived and established by composer and Professor Emeritus Richard Felciano in the 1980s with a focus on the creative interaction between music and technology. Professor David Wessel, a pioneer in computer music and music cognition, directed CNMAT until his death in 2014. During these years, research director Adrian Freed organized an ambitious research agenda that produced concrete, practical developments in music-related technologies, including widely adopted innovations such as Open Sound Control (OSC), the Sound Description Interchange Format (SDIF), the CNMAT tools for Max/MSP, and the recent cross-platform “odot” programming objects.

In the mid 1990s, the team expanded to include its current director, Professor Edmund Campion, associate director Richard Andrews, musical applications programmer Matthew Wright, and John MacCallum.

Today’s CNMAT continues to work with leading artists, performers, composers, and improvisers. In addition to its robust research agenda, CNMAT produces numerous concerts, lectures, and symposia. The eco ensemble, a leading Bay Area new-music ensemble, is in permanent residence at CNMAT.

To learn more, please visit the website at cnmat.berkeley.edu.