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**NEW MUSIC STARS LES PERCUSSIONS DE STRASBOURG
WILL TRACE THEIR ARTFORM'S EVOLUTION
ON SUNDAY, MARCH 13 AT 3:00 P.M. IN HERTZ HALL**

***Sightlines:* Pre-performance talk by composer Edmund Campion of the Center for New Music and Audio Technology at UC Berkeley March 13 at 2:00 p.m. at Hertz Hall**

BERKELEY, February 4, 2011—Les Percussions de Strasbourg, a six-member percussion ensemble with an impressive propulsive sound brings a program titled “The Evolution of Writing for Percussion” to Cal Performances on **Sunday, March 13, at 3:00 p.m.** Led by artistic director **Jean-Paul Bernard** and regarded as “interpreters of the highest caliber” (*Gramophone*), Les Percussions de Strasbourg will bring more than 250 percussion instruments to Berkeley in order to play works by **Edgard Varèse, Philippe Manoury, Raphaël Cendo, Edmund Campion** and **Yoshihisa Taira** in a 90-minute Hertz Hall program. “The ensemble gave an extraordinary performance, distinguished not only by rhythmic precision but also by matched tone, unanimity of attack, and beautifully shaped phrases and passages” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*).

A *Sightlines* pre-performance talk will be given by UC Berkeley professor of music **Edmund Campion** on Sunday, March 13 at 2:00 p.m. at Hertz Hall. Campion is faculty co-director of the Center for New Music and Audio Technology at UC Berkeley. This event is free to ticket holders.

PROGRAM

“The Evolution of Writing for Percussion” opens with Edgard Varèse’s ***Ionisation***. Written in 1933, *Ionisation* is generally considered to be the first Western composition written for percussion ensemble alone; the piece is heavily influenced by scientific principles of its day—in particular, the unlocking of the atom. It will be followed by movements from ***Livre des Claviers*** (“Book of Keys”), written by French-born UC San Diego composition professor Philippe Manoury in 1988. Of the six movements in Manoury’s piece, the ensemble will play two quartets

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for marimba and two sextets for “sixxens”—metal-keyed, gamelan-sounding instruments invented for Les Percussions de Strasbourg by the Greek-French composer and engineer Iannis Xenakis for his composition *Pléiades*. The first half of the program will conclude with *Refontes*, written in 2008 by French composer Raphaël Cendo, (born 1975) and dedicated to Les Percussions de Strasbourg. The piece’s title roughly translates as “re-casts,” and Cendo has said that the music is based on the sounds of metal—though those sounds are often processed by, and blended with, electronics.

After an intermission, Les Percussions de Strasbourg returns to the stage with *Ondoyants et divers* (“Wavelike and Diverse”) by UC Berkeley professor and Texas native Edmund Campion. The piece calls for five percussion instruments per musician—one skin, one wood, one metal, one pitched metal, and one auxiliary—and the music depends collectively on the six musicians at all times. *Ondoyants et divers* was commissioned for Les Percussions de Strasbourg through a *commande d’etat* from the French Ministry of Culture, and premiered on WDR German Radio in the fall of 2005. The concert concludes with **Yoshihisa Taira’s** *Hiérophonie V*. Written by the Japanese-French composer in 1975, this 20-minute piece combines percussive beats on a variety of instruments, silence and vocalizations (usually shouts) from the percussionists to create a dense and dramatic work.

Concerts by Les Percussions de Strasbourg are dynamic, physical, multisensory events. “Even before they come on, the stage full of gleaming possibilities—drums of different shapes, sizes, and colors, groups of suspended gongs—has set one up for an experience that is as much visual as aural” (*New York Times*). “Things are struck and limbs flail. The rhythms proceed mathematically; the musicians maneuver around a stage full of instruments dramatically” (*Los Angeles Times*).

LES PERCUSSIONS DE STRASBOURG

The official history of Les Percussions de Strasbourg begins on January 17, 1962 at a concert at the French Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française, but the group’s true beginning can be traced to 1959, when **Pierre Boulez** conducted the group’s six founding members in concert. For years after that, the percussionists—who played with the Orchestre

Municipal de Strasbourg and the Orchestre Radio-Strasbourg in France—traveled between Strasbourg and Baden-Baden, Germany, participating in contemporary music concerts with strong percussion elements. The group grew more structured, and formally adopted the name by which it has come to be known. One of its earliest musical triumphs was a presentation of Varèse's *Ionisation*, originally written for 13 players, played by just six percussionists; the performance, approved by the composer, was a huge success and established the ensemble's reputation.

In the nearly 50 years since, Les Percussions de Strasbourg has given more than 1,600 concerts in 70 countries. In that time, the “musician-researchers” of the ensemble have commissioned or inspired hundreds of works from a global roster of top composers, including Olivier Messiaen, Hugues Dufourt and Iannis Xenakis, and has developed in its repertoire works by 20th century composers Harrison Birtwistle, John Cage, André Jolivet, Edmund Campion, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Karl Heinz Stockhausen and Philippe Manoury. The group has presented 250 world premieres and participated in interdisciplinary art work in genres including theatre, film, video and dance. Les Percussions de Strasbourg has participated in festivals or residencies throughout Europe, and is associated with several national musical research centers including CIRM, GMEM and IRCAM.

For its 50th anniversary season, Les Percussions de Strasbourg tours North America, including a stop at Lincoln Center in New York City for the inaugural Tully Scope Festival, where it will give the New York premiere of Gérald Grisey's *Le noir de l'étoile* and present an all-Xenakis program; a performance at the French embassy in Washington, DC; concerts at universities in Massachusetts, Washington State and New York State; and performances in several Canadian cities. It is also planning a tour of Asia before 2013.

THE MUSICIANS

The current members of Les Percussions de Strasbourg have performed together for more than 15 years. They are led by artistic director **Jean-Paul Bernard**, who was born in 1957 in Toulon, France, and who first trained as a trumpet player before becoming a drummer for a rock band in 1978. He attended the Toulon French Conservatory, has taken jazz master classes with

Daniel Humair, and has studied *zarb* (a Persian drum also known as the *tonbak*) with Djamchjid Chemirani. Other players in Les Percussions de Strasbourg are:

Claude Ferrier, who joined the group in 1992. Born in 1964 in Avignon, France, Ferrier attended the Avignon Academy of Music and the Lyon French Conservatory. He has played with the Paris and the Lyon opera orchestras, and been a member of several chamber music ensembles. Ferrier teaches at the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers in Mulhouse, France.

Bernard Lesage, who joined Les Percussions de Strasbourg in 1992. He was born in St. Maur des Fossés, France in 1968, and earned a diploma in percussion from the Lyon French Conservatory, studying with Georges Van Gucht and François Dupin. He has been a soloist with Percussions Claviers de Lyon and several national orchestras, and teaches at the Les Percussions de Strasbourg school.

Keiko Nakamura was born in Fukuoka, Japan, in 1955 and joined Les Percussions de Strasbourg in 1981. She graduated in piano and percussion from Osaka Arts University and studied at the Strasbourg French Conservatory. Nakamura has won medals at several international percussion competitions, served as solo timpanist with the Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra, and performed in many solo recitals, ensembles and orchestras. She has also studied African music, and has directed the Les Percussions de Strasbourg school since 2005.

François Papierer, who was born in 1970 in Mulhouse, France and who joined Les Percussions de Strasbourg in 1996. He has won awards from CNAM in Mulhouse and earned a diploma from the Freiburg-im-Breisgau School of Music in Germany. Papierer has taught at the Délémont Conservatoire in Switzerland, studied tablas (Indian drums), and been awarded the *Hors les Murs* from the Médicis Villa.

Olaf Tzschoppe joined Les Percussions de Strasbourg in 1992. Born in Keil, Germany, in 1962, Tzschoppe earned a diploma from the Freiburg-im-Breisgau School of Music and studied at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He is a member of the contemporary music ensemble

Sur Plus, gives solo recitals, and has played with the Ensemble Modern and Musik Fabrik Ensemble. He also teaches at the Hochschule für Kunst de Bremen in Germany.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Les Percussions de Strasbourg** on **Sunday, March 13**, in Hertz Hall are priced at **\$42.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced three hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20.00 for all other community members. Information is available on Cal Performances' Facebook page and at 510-642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, three hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, March 13 at 2:00 p.m.
SIGHTLINES

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

Pre-performance talk by UC Berkeley music professor and composer Edmund Campion, faculty co-director of the Center for New Music and Audio Technology at UC Berkeley. *Sightlines* is a continuing program of pre- and post-performance discussions with Cal Performances' guest artists and scholars, designed to enrich the audience's experience. This event is free to ticket holders.

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Sunday, March 13 at 3:00 p.m.

Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

New Music

Les Percussions de Strasbourg

Jean-Paul Bernard, artistic director

Program: The Evolution of Writing for Percussion

Varèse/Ionisation

Manoury/Livre des Claviers

1st quartet for marimba

1st sextet for sixxens

2nd quartet for marimba

2nd sextet for sixxens

Cendo/Refontes

Campion/Ondoyants et divers

Taira/Hiérophonie V

Tickets: \$42.00 for all performances; available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

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