

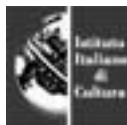


Performers

Stacey Pelinka, flute
William Wohlmacher, clarinet
Sarah Rathke, oboe
Roy Malan, violin
Elizabeth Runnicles, viola
Leighton Fong, cello
Julie Steinberg, piano
William Winant, percussion

This U.S. premiere performance of Mei-Fang Lin's Multiplication Virtuelle is made possible in part by a generous legacy from the Women's Philharmonic.

Tonight's performances of music by Salvatore Sciarrino are made possible in part by a generous grant from the Istituto Italiano di Cultura with support from Sonora. We thank also Russ Irvin for helping to underwrite this performance of Infinito Nero.



This concert is made possible in part by a grant from Wells Fargo.



SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS

David Milnes, Music Director

Monday, 10 October 2005 8 pm
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts - Forum

INFINITE BLACK

MEI-FANG LIN

Multiplication Virtuelle (Virtual Multiplication) (2004)

United States Premiere

Daniel Kennedy, percussion

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

Klavierstück IX (Piano Piece IX) (1954/1961)

Chryssie Nanou, piano

SALVATORE SCIARRINO

Piano Sonata IV (1992)

Chryssie Nanou, piano

~ INTERMISSION ~

SALVATORE SCIARRINO

Infinito Nero (Infinite Black) (1998)

Bo Chang, mezzo-soprano



HONORING NANCY ELLIS

For the luxuriously long period of thirty years, SFCMP has been extraordinarily fortunate to count among its most treasured members the violist Nancy Ellis, who has announced her retirement from the ensemble as of the end of the 2004-05 season. Fortunately, Nancy will remain available for selected projects as an emeritus member.

During her distinguished tenure she participated in performances of works by such composers as Hans Abrahamsen, John Adams, Stephen Albert, Gilbert Amy, George Barati, Ross Bauer, Robert Beaser, Alban Berg, Luciano Berio, Edward Boguslawski, Charles Boone, Linda Bouchard, Pierre Boulez, Henry Brant, Elizabeth Brown, John Cage, Paul Chihara, Sheree Clement, Aaron Copland, Conrad Cummings, Luigi Dallapiccola, Mario Davidovsky, Peter Maxwell Davies, Anthony Davis, Claude Debussy, Aurelio de la Vega, Edison Denisov, Tamar Diesendruck, Kui Dong, Edwin Dugger, George Edwards, Robert Erickson, Morton Feldman, Richard Felciano, Andrew Frank, Christopher Fulkerson, Michael Gandolfi, Alberto Ginastera, Henryk Górecki, Gérard Grisey, Ellen Harrison, Jonathan Harvey, Hans Werner Henze, Martin Herman, Sydney Hodkinson, Shin-Ichiro Ikebe, Andrew Imbrie, Michael Jarrell, Betsy Jolas, Earl Kim, Hi Kyung Kim, Oliver Knussen, Karl Kohn, William Kraft, György Kurtág, David Lang, Paul Lansky, Frank LaRocca, Mario Lavista, Henri Lazarof, Peter Lieberon, Magnus Lindberg, Edwin London, Steven Mackey, Mesias Manguashca, Javier Torres Maldonado, Ingram Marshall, Richard Meale, John Melcher, Arne Mellnas, Oliver Messiaen, Josep Mestres Quaderny, Darius Milhaud, Eric Moe, Stephen Mosko, Lawrence Moss, Tristan Murail, Hyo-Shin Na, Joaquin Nin-Culmell, Tiberiu Olah, Pablo Ortiz, Randall Packer, Anthony Payne, Wayne Peterson, Bernard Rands, Wolfgang Rihm, George Rochberg, Christopher Rouse, Loren Rush, Frederic Rzewski, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, David Schimmel, Alfred Schnittke, Arnold Schoenberg, William Schuman, Ralph Shapey, David Sheinfeld, Hale Smith, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Igor Stravinsky, Toru Takemitsu, Heuwell Tircuit, Sándor Veress, Anton Webern, Olly Wilson, Marc Winges, Walter Winslow, Charles Wuorinen, Isang Yun and Zhou Long.

Music Director David Milnes joins with the Board, staff and musicians of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in expressing warm best wishes and gratitude to Nancy Ellis for her outstanding service!

MEI-FANG LIN (B. 1973)

From Taiwan to Illinois, from California to Paris and back, Mei-Fang Lin is steadily deepening her interest in the musical utterances enabled by old and new technologies. Trained as a pianist, she came to the United States to study electronic music (with Scott Wyatt) and composition (with Guy Garnett) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Although currently pursuing her Ph. D. at the University of California, Berkeley under the guidance of Edmund Campion and Edwin Dugger, she has also spent considerable time honing her skills abroad. Awards from the Frank Huntington Beebe Fund and U. C. Berkeley's George Ladd Prize enabled her to spend three years studying composition with Philippe Leroux (whose music will be featured on a San Francisco Contemporary Music Players program in December). While in France, Lin came to the attention of the prestigious computer music center IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique), who selected her for their 2003-04 year-long course in computer music and composition. It was during this period that she conceived not only the work we will hear tonight, *Multiplication Virtuelle*, but also a work for solo violin and reverb, *Souvenir d'une fée* (Souvenir of a fairy), and two ensemble pieces, *Le Chemin Caché* (The Hidden Path) and *L'image reconstituée* (The Reconstituted Image), all of which were premiered in France this June.

Before her Parisian sojourn, Lin was best known for her pieces involving tape, including *Interaction* (2001), *Internal Landscape* (2000), and *Ascension* (1999). When asked about the challenges and rewards of this sort of writing, she responds that, contrary to popular belief, writing recorded electronic music can actually be more intuitive than writing for acoustic instruments. Composing for tape involves a perpetual process of listening and evaluating and listening again—a cycle of “trial and error” that fosters open minds and well-trained ears. The particular attention to timbre that characterizes all of her music represents just one result of her intense, “active listening.” Now, as

she brings this aural acuity to her work with live electronics, Lin seeks to combine the inexhaustible sound sources enabled by new music technology with the physical presence and dramatic possibilities of concert performance.

For Lin, the power of live performance rests in gesture. Her understanding of gesture springs both from her experiences as a performer of western music and from her understanding of Chinese opera and philosophy. Although her piano duo *Journey to the West* (1997)—an early work commissioned in Taipei for pianists Rolf-Peter Wille and Lina Yeh—makes recognizable use of a Chinese folk song, Lin typically sees her cultural heritage reflected in more sophisticated ways: in the treatment of time, in the subsuming of particular moments or motions into an uninterrupted flow, and in the importance of circles, cycles, and the unification of individual segments (like the characters in calligraphy) into a larger continuity. In fact, three years after *Journey to the West*, and after making her own “journey to the west,” Lin ventured a more complex treatment of the same folk material in her piano solo *Disintegration* (2000), whose five movements she compares to the changing impressions one gets when viewing the same water in different containers.

Contrasting manifestations of Lin’s fascination with time and gesture can be heard in two compositions dating from 2001: *Time Tracks*, for a mixed ensemble of eleven instruments, and *Interaction*, for piano and tape. Building on a pair of almost choreographic moments (a smooth glissando and a resonant attack, introduced by trombone and bass drum, respectively), *Time Tracks* plays on the idea that time can seem to move at different rates, with different subgroups of instruments representing different strata of activity and a musical surface that displays musical motifs in various transformations. While *Interaction* relies on a single performer, it still manages to convey a ghostly dialogue between distinct personalities. Here, the synthesized tape part (which was composed first) seems to draw out from the piano itself scattered answers that intertwine more than they echo.

Lin has received awards from the American Music Center, the National Association of Composers, the Look & Listen Festival, the Pierre Schaeffer Competition and Luigi Russolo competitions in Italy,

the Bourges Competition and Prix SCRIME in France, and the Music Taipei Composition Competition in Taiwan. Her works have been featured at such festivals as the ISCM World Music Days, the Festival Résonances, the Festival SynthPse, the Seoul International Computer Music Festival, the Vancouver Pro Musica Festival, and the Seamus Conference, among many others. In other venues, her music has been played by Alea III of Boston, New York’s North/South Consonance and Parnassus Ensemble, Ostrava Banda in the Czech Republic, Bratislava’s Ensemble Melos-Etos, the Empyrean Ensemble, the Nieuw Ensemble of Amsterdam, the Armonia Opus Trio of Buenos Aires, Ensemble Cairn in Paris and the Taiwan National Symphony Orchestra. Her current projects include two pieces for ensembles in New York, a string quartet for the Contemporary Chamber Orchestra Taipei, and a solo work for violist Ellen Ruth Rose and electronics.

Multiplication Virtuelle (2004)

for percussion and electronics

Although Lin has ample experience with tape and electroacoustic music, this is her first work for live electronics, in which the performer’s actions shape the electronic component of the music in real time. In this case, the percussionist triggers a variety of sound samples as he strikes each of seven instruments in turn. Although the sound samples themselves are pre-selected, the force of the soloist’s attack affects the speed at which the given sample is played back, and each change in speed produces a corresponding alteration in pitch level. Every performer and every performance will therefore involve a fixed sequence of elements but an infinite variety of sounds.

Like a practitioner of tai chi, the percussionist moves from station to station around the percussion circle, as if taking part in an ancient ritual. Beginning with the opening invocation, there is a gradual progression from unpitched percussion (bass drum, snare drum) to semi-pitched instruments (high and low conga drums, followed by a quintet of temple blocks) to the vibraphone and crotales. The Lion’s Roar gets the final word, but in addition to the growl that gives the instrument its name, Lin has invented a pizzicato (plucking) technique that conjures up a more audible double bass pizzicato sound from the

electronics. This back-and-forth between player and speaker, together with a cyclical rotation of rhythmic patterns throughout the piece, mean that *Multiplication Virtuelle* involves experiencing circles—some obvious and others hidden.

Multiplication Virtuelle received its premiere in October 2004 at the Espace de Projection at IRCAM during the Resonances Festival at the hands of percussionist Jean Geoffroy, to whom the piece is dedicated. It was funded in part by the Composer Assistance Program of the American Music Center.

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN (B. 1928)

In a 1971 interview during a visit to London, Karlheinz Stockhausen declared: “I respond to sounds. Directly. Sound is my air. Whenever I deal with sounds, they organize themselves, so to speak. They respond very well to me, and I to them.” At mid-century, few major composers fell entirely outside his sphere of influence as he did pioneering work in European serialism and electronic music. Since that time, he has participated in the development of such aesthetic trends as “chance” or “indeterminate” music, graphic notation, and computer music. Through it all, his star has continued to shine with an almost otherworldly serenity, and his music has inspired countless younger composers, including Salvatore Sciarrino, whose Sonata IV seems to draw its clangorous spirit out of the ringing chords that open Stockhausen’s Piano Piece IX.

Little in Stockhausen’s early music education suggested that he would catapult to the center of attention as he did upon enrolling in the Summer Music Courses at Darmstadt in 1951 and completing his first widely recognized work, *Kreuzspiel* (Cross-play). Here he associated with key figures in contemporary music: Herbert Eimert, who introduced him to the serial methods of twelve-tone writing championed by Schoenberg and Webern, and Olivier Messiaen, whose *Mode de*

valeurs et d’intensités (Mode of Values and Intensities) showed that these serial methods could be used to organize elements other than pitch. Inspired to study with Messiaen in Paris, he quickly met Pierre Boulez, whose own work with serialism and electronics would develop in counterpoint with Stockhausen’s for decades, and Pierre Schaeffer, whose experiments with tape-recorded sounds, musique concrète, were challenging relationships between composition and performance, and between music and noise.

Returning to Cologne in 1953, Stockhausen took a job with Eimert at the new Studio for Electronic Music housed by the West German Radio. “I became very interested in the differences between sounds,” he recalled in 1971: “what is the difference between a piano sound and a vowel aaah and the sound of the wind-shhh or whsss. It was after analyzing a lot of sounds that this second thought came up (it was always implied): if I can analyze sounds which exist already and I have recorded, why can I not try to synthesize sound in order to find new sounds, if possible.” He started by using sine waves, the most elemental of electronic sounds, in two *Elektronische Studien* (1953, 1954). More influential were his works of the later fifties: *Gesang der Jünglinge* (Song of the Youths) (1956), which incorporates a boy’s disembodied voice, chanting text from the Biblical Book of Daniel, and *Kontakte* (Contacts) (1959, 1960) which began as a purely electronic piece but soon became the composer’s first experiment in combining live performance and tape-recorded sound.

Of course, ideas born in the realm of electronic music could easily spill out into acoustic works, as in the gigantic score *Gruppen* (Groups) (1955-57) for three independent orchestras, which project their sounds, like speakers, from different parts of the stage or concert hall. More striking still is the unaccompanied, amplified voices work *Stimmung* (Tuning) (1968) which sustains for more than seventy minutes a single chord, enlivened by the singers’ shifting emphasis on different vowel sounds and individual components of the overtone series, and by the insertion of “magic names” taken from a whole world of sacred traditions.

Despite their intricate mathematical construction, works like *Stimmung* exhibit a spirituality that has become more and more pronounced dur-

ing Stockhausen's career—particularly after a mental breakdown in 1968. Among the immediate results of this difficult period were a series of texts-for-performance, collectively known as *Aus den Sieben Tagen* (From the Seven Days). Responding to such instructions as “Play a vibration in the rhythm of dreaming / and slowly transform it / into the rhythm of the universe / Repeat this as often as you can,” the composer's own recorded realization blurs the boundary between composition and improvisation in a hybrid practice that Stockhausen calls “intuitive music.” Beginning in 1977, and relying on close collaboration with trusted friends and family members, Stockhausen has devoted himself almost exclusively to composing an epic, multimedia, operatic cycle known as *Licht* (Light). With one opera named for each day of the week, the whole production involves video, dance, mime, long passages without singing, and even scenes written in an invented meta-language.

Stockhausen's worldview embraces an extremely fluid boundary between life and art, and a vision of the artist as both agent and conduit. He believes that a true composer, one who transcends self-expression, “tries to discover a universal language which is vibration and rhythm—that's what everybody has in common. He wants to become a musician of the world. But the stars, too, are sounding.” Such a broad conception of art has had its unfortunate moments, most notably in the composer's widely reported remark that the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 constituted “the greatest work of art there has ever been.” But for the most part, Stockhausen has trained his mysticism on more uplifting matters: “People usually think that the arts should only entertain, but that is not the role of the arts at all. The role of the arts is to explore the inner space of man; to find out how much and how intensely he can vibrate, through sound, through what he hears, whichever it is. They are a means by which to expand his inner universe.”

Klavierstück IX (Piano Piece IX) (1954/1961)

for piano

In 1986, Stockhausen described the appropriate way to approach his Piano Pieces: “Piano music concerns every music lover to a greater

extent than other music, because he can grasp what is possible with two hands and ten fingers. He who wishes to gain the most through hearing my Piano Pieces [should] transfer them onto a cassette, put on earphones, close his eyes, imagine seating himself in front of the piano and move his hands and fingers—in thought, but even better actually, physically . . . In this process, he becomes aware that this music trains a new kind of human being . . . In this music, one climbs aboard as into a spiritual vehicle, and from that moment on one must pay attention with extreme concentration in order to understand everything if possible and [in order] not to fall out.”

Stockhausen originally planned to complete a series of twenty-one works, linked through a complicated nexus of pitch and proportional relations. The fourteen extant Piano Pieces span more than thirty years and a wide range of styles, from the tightly serial miniature Piano Piece IV to the more expansive Piano Piece XI (1956), in which the performer chooses at random to order or omit nineteen different segments of music, to the late Pieces XII–XIV, which consist of excerpts from the opera cycle *Licht*.

The Piano Piece IX was conceived in 1954, but not completed until 1961. It thus benefitted from Stockhausen's intervening engagement with electronic media. According to Robin Maconie, its block-like structure resembles the splicing together of discrete, pre-recorded tape samples; the use of graduated pedaling techniques simulates electronically controlled reverberation; and the periodic interruption of the chord iterations that begin the piece mirror effects that could have been achieved with an impulse generator. Not surprisingly, a mathematical structure undergirds the gradual dissolution of Piano Piece IX, in which the grouping of subsections and choice of tempi are partly dictated by the Fibonacci series [1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, . . .] in which each successive number is the sum of the two previous numbers and the ratio between two adjacent numbers gradually approaches the “golden mean.”

Although this framework remains hidden from the average ear, Stockhausen himself viewed the Piano Pieces as a perfect training ground for better listening: “It is inestimable progress,” he notes, “when one gradually learns to recognize if 1 pitch or 2 or 3 or 4 or 6

or 9 pitches are simultaneously played; when in Piano Piece IX one really becomes aware of why the chord at the beginning and during the course of the piece so elusively staggers and shimmeringly turns within its spectrum as long as it is played exactly in tempo 160 [beats] per minute and becomes very gradually softer with depressed resonance pedal . . . ”

SALVATORE SCIARRINO (B. 1947)

Oceans of delicacy with islands of violent power—this is one way of encapsulating the oeuvre of Salvatore Sciarrino, widely believed to be the foremost Italian composer of his generation. Sciarrino himself has likened his music to “an erupting volcano seen from a distance,” and his metaphor aptly captures the fact that one’s perception of the composer’s works depends radically on one’s sense of perspective. From up close, the energy of his atomistic writing explodes into its constituent tone colors. From a distance—even from the typical distance between stage and seat in a concert hall—his compositions appear exquisite, delicate, and rarefied almost to the threshold of human comprehension. Both sides of Sciarrino (and their relative proportion in his overall output) are represented in the works on this concert program: while most of his music possesses the extreme quietude of the half-hour long monodrama *Infinito Nero*, the mind-shattering intensity of his Piano Sonata IV is rarely far from the surface.

The more one gets to know Sciarrino, the more astonishing it becomes to realize how little of his music is known in the United States. This is a composer with more than fifty recordings to his credit, a host of influential European performers among his admirers, and students throughout the Italian peninsula, especially in Rome, Milan, and his home-town Città di Castello. Beginning in the late 1990s, Sciarrino’s dramatic works gained him a foothold in New York—the *Aspern Suite* (1978) and *Luci Mieì Traditrici* (O My Betraying Eyes) (1998) were heard in 2001, and his retelling of *Macbeth* (2002) reached Lincoln Center only a year later. Now, an ever-greater number of audiences are making the acquaintance of the composer whom

critic Kyle Gann calls “modest in his aims yet not self-effacing, highly expert yet whimsical, accessible in a certain way, yet also an enigma.”

Sciarrino had the good fortune to be born in Palermo when it was a hotbed of activity for the musical avant-garde. A child prodigy in music and the visual arts, he began composing at age twelve and was featured at Palermo’s International New Music Week when he was only fifteen. Then and after, he was largely self-taught, though subsequent years involved brief periods of study with Turi Belfiore and Franco Evangelisti (at Rome’s Accademia di S. Cecilia); far more important was the influence of well-established contemporary composers, particularly Luigi Nono and to a lesser extent György Ligeti. One could say that Sciarrino’s most important training came instead from performers, whose “extended techniques” (unusual performance effects such as string harmonics or flute key-clicks) form the fabric of many of his works, and less formally from philosophers, whose ideas have left their traces on Sciarrino’s thinking about nature, tradition, sound and silence.

The most immediately striking aspect of Sciarrino’s aesthetic is his preference for soft sounds; his music is quiet but never still. In vocal and instrumental pieces alike, his exploration of the noisy frontier on the edge of audibility seems linked (intentionally) to an understanding of the ordered chaos of nature and (perhaps unintentionally) to the ruminations of American experimental composer John Cage. “Is there a metaphysics of silence?” Sciarrino inquires. “There is a sort of reversal in my music in that the sounds preserve the traces of the silence from which they come and into which they return, a silence which itself is an infinite rumbling of microscopic sonorities . . . For in absolute terms silence does not exist. Even in an empty room there are still heartbeats. As long as one is human there is no silence; and when there is perception, there is music.”

Beginning in the early 1970s, Sciarrino explored this musical philosophy with great consistency. It is especially apparent in his solo works, where extended techniques predominate and every sound is valued. For example, the *Six Caprices* (1975-76) for solo violin and the *Three Brilliant Nocturnes* for solo viola take shape through a loosely patterned recurrence of particular gestures or textures—trills, tremolo figures,

harmonics, and broken arpeggios. Among the highpoints of Sciarrino's oeuvre is his impressive series of pieces for solo flute—including *Hermes* (1984) and *Canzona di ringraziamento* (Song of Thanks) (1985)—replete with breath sounds, key clicks, multiphonics, and implied polyphony. Written during the 1980s for flutist Roberto Fabbricani (who had also collaborated with Nono) and during the 1990s with Mario Caroli, these works create what musicologist Luciano Chessa describes as “a natural language made out of extended techniques.” Sciarrino's ensemble pieces invite a similar kind of listening for the accretion and decay of sound fragments. Works like *Lo spazio inverso* (The Inverse Space) (1985) or the *Six Brief Quartets* for string quartet (1991-92) offer a mostly quiet but sometimes voluble dialogue of unusual performance techniques. And even the large-scale quasi-concerto *Un'immagine di Arpocrate* (An Image of Arpocrate) (1974-79) fills its 45-minute span with intimate rustlings, minimal changes, and the sounds of distant thunder (created by large, vibrating metal sheets).

No matter what the medium, Sciarrino's art involves the decomposition of conventional sound. But in many cases, it also involves the re-composition of elements from past styles in western music, including Renaissance vocal music as in *Luci miei traditrici*, which builds on the music of Claude le Jeune; baroque counterpoint, as in *Morte a Venezia* (Death in Venice) of 1991, whose musical material is drawn from J. S. Bach; and (perhaps more surprising) American popular song, which makes audible appearances in *Cailles en sarcophage* (1979), *Vanitas* (1981), and *Nove canzoni del XX secolo* (New Songs of the 20th Century) (1991). Especially in his works for the piano, Sciarrino seems to have felt the weight of countless “classics” from the 18th- and 19th-century repertoire. His first Piano Sonata (1976), for example, adopts the distinctive keyboard mechanics of Franz Liszt, and his playful *Anamorfoosi* (1980) takes its skeleton from Ravel's *JeuX d'eau* while sporting the melody of “Singing in the Rain”!

What does such musical punning have to do with the ethereal, barely audible Sciarrino? Writer on contemporary music Gavin Thomas suggests an answer: “Sciarrino's disembodied works . . . ignore all that is normally considered the substance of music, stripping away everything except the very extremities of sound, the residue, the noise of bow on string, the sound of breathing, as though the whole of west-

ern musical tradition had been filtered down to its constituent atoms . . . [His] music is an art of submerged nostalgia . . . whether for the primeval innocence of nature or the extinguished traditions of western music” a nostalgia whose honesty is “too clear-sighted to be entirely comfortable.” Not comfortable, perhaps, but unfailingly stimulating, and ultimately unforgettable.

Piano Sonata IV (1992)

Much of Sciarrino's music takes as one of its goals a transformation in our perception of time. Typically, this is accomplished through extreme subtlety of gesture and unpredictable patterning of utterance. In the Piano Sonata IV, however, the composer takes an entirely different approach. Rather than playing in the liminal area between sound and silence, the Sonata takes the obsessive iteration of sonority to such an extreme that the passage (or illusion?) of “clock time” is obliterated by more complicated conceptions of duration and reality.

In describing his unrelenting Sonata, Sciarrino introduces the idea of a “time-window,” through which one comes to grasp parallel dimensions—the inherently multiple ways of interpreting any moment in time. Sciarrino's cluster chords are carefully chosen—for the unique tone colors created by their register and spacing more than for their actual pitches. Yet these, too, function in service of not-quite-stasis, instead of identifiable harmonic or melodic motion. As the composer puts it, “...the Sonata IV, through its purposeful simplification of [musical] elements, superimposes these ‘time-windows’ in order to make clearly perceptible two cinematic pathways unfolding at the same time.” While this may sound abstract, coming face-to-face, ear-to-ear, and mind-to-mind with Sciarrino's Sonata IV is an intensely and inescapably concrete experience thanks to the strength of the performer and the sheer physicality of sound.

Infinito Nero (Infinite Black) (1998)

for mezzo soprano and flute, oboe, clarinet, piano, percussion, violin, viola, and cello

To the innocent ear, Sciarrino's monodrama *Infinito Nero* might seem utterly fantastic; surely there could be no factual basis for its extraor-

dinary sounds: evanescent flutterings, attenuated raindrops, spectral sighs. Yet the work—subtitled “ecstasy of an act,” or perhaps “ecstasy in one act”—is in fact one of Sciarrino’s most realistic in its mirroring of physical sound sources. Perhaps “imaginary realism” would be a better term to describe this composer’s recreation of the ecstasy of Maria Maddalena de’ Pazzi, the early-seventeenth-century mystic whose terrifying lapses into madness yielded texts awash in vivid and sometimes gruesome religious imagery.

Although Maria Maddalena was canonized by the Church, Sciarrino was intrigued by her not-necessarily-saintly demeanor. In an interview before the premiere at the Wittener Tage für Neue Kammermusik in Germany, the composer observed: “She was an unpleasant, a ‘devilish’ figure: with her you cannot really differentiate between God and the devil, her visions are all similarly frightening. Here you really experience the pathology of visionsHer story is unbelievable. She never wrote a single word. Maria Maddalena was attended by eight novices: four repeated what she said because she spoke much too fast to write it all down at once and the other four wrote everything down. She did not ‘speak’—words actually shot out of her like a machine gun and then she fell silent for a long period.” Thus the intensity of sudden sound amidst a lingering but never static silence link *Infinito Nero* both to its historical antecedent and to Sciarrino’s more general predilections.

The pointillistic coloratura effusions required to impersonate the raving Maria Maddalena are unlike anything in the vocal repertory—modern music critic Paul Griffiths calls them “prestissimo flashes . . . on the edge of ululation” and they put any dramatic mezzo to the test. As stunning as these tiny fireworks are, however, their instrumental surroundings may be even more remarkable. Out of the mixed ensemble emerge what Griffiths calls “the sounds of breathing, of panting and of heartbeats.” He observes, “this is music right on the verge of being sound effect, but the gestures are so varied, so exactly conceived and so tightly played that while conveying natural sounds with exceptional accuracy, they mean more. One might imagine that they speak for Maria Maddalena’s body, waiting to be overtaken by her reeling mind, or that they stand for her attendants, watching her in expectation.”

Infinito Nero is dedicated to the Ensemble Recherche and was written while keeping in mind the voice of mezzo-soprano Sonia Turchetta, Sciarrino’s long-time artistic collaborator.

—Beth E. Levy

The ball lights will be down during the performance of this piece.

Infinito Nero

estasi di un atto
di Salvatore Sciarrino (da Maria
Maddalena de’ Pazzi)

l’anima si trasformava nel sangue,
tanto da non intendere poi altro che
sangue, non vedere altro che sangue,
non gustare altro che sangue, non
sentire altro che sangue, non pen-
sare altro che di sangue, non potere
pensare se non di sangue. E tutto
ciò che operava la sommergeva e
profondava in esso sangue
influirsi influivi influiva rinfluiva e il
sangue influiva rinfluiva influivi rin-
fluire rinfluisce rinfluisce influivi
rinfluivano influivi rinfluivano
superesaltando
allora il Santo mi versò sul capo un
vaso e il sangue mi coperse tutta.
Anche la Santa versò. Il latte
mescolandosi col sangue mi fa una
bellissima veste. Obumbrata la faccia
o, o, o (*silenzio*) o, o, o (*sil.*)
o se le piante potessino avere amore,
non griderebbero altro
o, io non lo so (*sil.*)
timui timore amoris. Timui timore
amoris. Timui timore amoris (*sil.*)
ma dillo, ma dillo
mors intravit per fenestras. Ma tu
perché
figure immagini e facce, aspirazione,
inspirazione e respirazione in te (*sil.*)
vieni

Infinite Black

ecstasy in one act
by Salvatore Sciarrino (based on the
writings of Maria Maddalena de’
Pazzi)

The Spirit was transforming into
blood, understanding nothing but
blood, seeing nothing but blood, tast-
ing nothing but blood, feeling nothing
but blood, thinking nothing but
blood, unable to think anything but
blood. And everything it did, sub-
merged and sunk it into that very
blood
Flowing in in-flowing influx flowing
out and the blood flowed in flowed
out flows out flows out out-flowing
influx outflowing overexalting
then the Saint poured his cup over my
head and the blood covered all of me.
And so did the woman Saint. The
milk mixed with blood makes a beau-
tiful gown for me. Covering my face
oh, oh, oh (*silence*) oh, oh, oh (*silence*)
oh if the plants could have love, they
would shout of nothing else
oh, I do not know (*silence*)
timui timore amoris. Timui timore
amoris. Timui timore amoris (*silence*)
but say it, but say it
mors intravit per fenestras. But
because
figures, images and faces, aspiration,
inspiration and respiration in you
(*silence*)
you come

sul corpo tuo aperture a noi
 incognite. Usci, finestre, buche,
 celle, forami di cielo, caverne.
 Senza fondo stillanti. Sono le
 piaghe dentro cui mi perdo
 vieni, vieni
 con la corona: le sue spine, lunghe,
 trapassano il Padre Eterno in cielo
 egli scrive su di me con il sangue.
 Tu con il latte della Vergine. Lo
 Spirito con le lagrime
 vieni
 non si aprino le nuvole, si bene il
 vergineo ventre (*sil.*) si ma
 vieni, vieni, deh, vieni, o, vieni
 vieni (*sil.*)
 ohimé, vivendo muoio (*sil.*) o, o, o
 (*sil.*)
 orsù eccomi in terra (*sil.*) non
 posso ir più giù io (*sil.*) e sì (*sil.*) o
 savia pazzia (*sil.*)
 io non intendo (*sil.*) è meglio il
 tuo, sì, sì (*sil.*)
 ohimé (*sil.*)
 tu sei senza fine, ma io vorrei
 veder in te qualche fine

openings on your body unknown to
 us. Doorways, windows, holes, cells,
 apertures in the sky, caverns.
 Bottomless trickling. They are the
 wounds in which I lose myself
 come, come
 with the crown: its long thorns pierce
 the Eternal Father in heaven
 he writes on me with his blood. You
 with the Virgin's milk.
 The Spirit with tears
 come
 the clouds do not open, but the vir-
 ginal womb does (*silence*) yes but
 come, come, ye, come, oh, come
 come (*silence*)
 alas, I die living (*silence*) oh, oh, oh
 (*silence*)
 now here I am on earth (*silence*) I can
 no longer go further down (*silence*)
 and yes (*silence*) oh wise madness
 (*silence*) I don't understand (*silence*)
 yours is better, yes, yes (*silence*) alas
 (*silence*)
 you are endless, but I would like to
 see an end in you

Translated by Robin Treasure

Featured Performers

Bo Chang, mezzo-soprano, gave the U.S. premiere of
 Sciarrino's *Infinito Nero* and *Le Voci Sottovetro* at the 2003
 Lincoln Center Festival, where she was praised for her
 "excellent and precise" execution. Having worked with The
 Juilliard Percussion Ensemble, The New Juilliard Ensemble,
 Ensemble Sospeso, and Continuum among others, she gave con-
 certs at the Whynote Festival in France, Tenri Institute, New York
 Public Library in Cooper Union, the Summergarden series at the
 Museum of Modern Art, and the National Design Museum. Her
 repertoire includes Luciano Berio's *Circles* and *Folk Songs*, John
 Cage's *Aria*, Jacob Druckman's *Animus II*, and works by Guo
 Wenjing, Leonid Hrabovsky, Paul Chihara, Louis Andriessen, and
 Yanov-Yanovksy.

A versatile artist, Bo Chang has sung operatic roles ranging from
 the Baroque period to the present including Satirino in Cavalli's *La
 Calisto*, Lazuli in Chabrier's *L'Étoile*, and Hermia in Britten's *A
 Midsummer Night's Dream*. She sang the role of Manjali in the world
 premiere of Tony Prabowo's opera, *The King's Witch* at Alice Tully
 Hall, and performed as an actor/dancer in the U. S. premiere of
 Mark Anthony Turnage's opera *Greek* at the Aspen Music Festival.
 Most recently, she has performed works by Ruth Crawford Seeger
 and Virgil Thomson at the Lucerne Festival in Switzerland.
 During the 2004 season of the Ravinia Festival, she was a featured
 artist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Christoph
 Eschenbach, sang André Caplet's rarely heard *Trois Fables de Jean de
 la Fontaine* at the Steans Institute, and took part in a non-stop
 marathon recital dedicated to Charles Ives for the Festival's
 Centennial Celebration.

Pianist Chryssie Nanou performs music in a broad spectrum
 of styles with special expertise in contemporary repertoire
 and the performance practice of electro-acoustic music.
 Born in Greece, she studied in Paris and the United States at Ecole
 Normale de Musique de Paris/Alfred Cortot and the Peabody
 Institute at Johns Hopkins University. A prizewinner at the Albert
 Roussel International Competition, she performs regularly in
 recitals and chamber music concerts around the world, featuring

an eclectic repertoire that includes works by Couperin, Berio, Crumb, Beethoven, Ligeti and Davidovsky. As a solo artist and chamber musician, she has given the world premieres of works by many young composers including the first performance of George Antheil's *Ballet Mechanique* in a version with synchronized film. Nanou is currently the Artistic Coordinator of Stanford University's CCRMA (Center for the Creation and Research of Music and Acoustics) where she oversees both the CCRMA Concert Series and the Strictly Ballroom concert series.

Daniel Kennedy, percussionist, holds a master's degree from California Institute of the Arts, and a doctoral degree from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, where he studied with multi-percussionist Raymond DesRoches, hand-drum specialist John Bergamo, and tabla master Swapan Chaudhuri. In addition to exploring and performing the music of cultures from around the world, including India, the Middle East, and Indonesia, Daniel has been the founding member of several contemporary music ensembles, including the California E.A.R. Unit and the Talujon Percussion Quartet, and has performed throughout the United States, Europe, India, Bali, and Japan. As a soloist, his recent concert appearances include performances of Steven Mackey's *Micro-Concerto* at the Kennedy Center, the Los Angeles County Museum, U. N. Omaha's "Day of Percussion," Queens College, and Southern Oregon University Ashland. In addition, he has performed with the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, the Group for Contemporary Music, the New York New Music Ensemble, the New Jersey Percussion Ensemble, the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players, EARPLAY, the Emyrean Ensemble, Music Now, and Gamelan Sekar Jaya. He has also appeared at such festivals as Other Minds, Bang on a Can, Monadnock, Cabrillo, Holland-America, and the American Dance Festival. He is currently on the faculty at Sacramento State University, where he is Instructor of Percussion and Artistic Director of the Festival of New American Music.

David Milnes is a conductor of extraordinary breadth and long-standing commitment to contemporary music. In his early years, he studied not only piano and organ, but also clarinet, cello, and voice. Milnes received his undergraduate education in music at SUNY Stony Brook. In 1984, at age 27, he won the prestigious Exxon Conductor position with the San Francisco Symphony. He remained as the Symphony's Assistant Conductor and Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra until 1986, working closely with Edo de Waart and Herbert Blomstedt. Following study and collaboration with such renowned conductors as Leonard Bernstein, Erich Leinsdorf, Otto-Werner Müller, and Michael Tilson Thomas, he earned his doctorate in conducting from Yale University in 1989.

From 1994-2002, Milnes was Principal Guest Conductor of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra and also guest conducted numerous orchestras across the United States. He has conducted at the Tanglewood, Aspen, and Monadnock Music Festivals, and has led operatic repertoire ranging from Mozart to Weill. He maintains a keen interest in jazz, which has led to appearances on jazz saxophone with Gene Krupa, Chuck Mangione, John Pizzarelli, and Billy Taylor.

In 1996, Milnes joined the music faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, where he directs its symphony orchestra and the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players. He first conducted the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1997, and joined the ensemble as Music Director in June 2002.

The **San Francisco Contemporary Music Players** (SFCMP), now in its 35th year, is a leader among America's most distinguished and successful chamber music organizations, performing, commissioning, and recording the music of today's composers. The group presents works written for both large and small chamber ensembles. SFCMP is a nine-time winner of the prestigious national ASCAP/Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music, having commissioned 66 pieces and performed over 1,000 new works, including 51 U.S. and 126 world premieres.

Each season the ensemble performs a subscription series in the Bay Area. It has also toured widely throughout California, with performances on such concert series as San Francisco Performances, Cal Performances, the Stern Grove Festival, the Other Minds Festival, Los Angeles' Monday Evening Concerts, the Ojai Festival, and the Festival of New American Music in Sacramento. SFCMP made its European debut at the Cheltenham Festival of Music in 1986 and its East Coast debut at the Library of Congress in 2001. The ensemble has recorded eight albums of its own and contributed to eight others. Its musical outreach programs have involved masterclasses, performance demonstrations, and an evening course for adults.

Executive Director **Adam Frey** obtained his B.A. in Music from Harvard University, and his M.B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, with emphasis on marketing and planning. He joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1991 after six years with Sherman, Clay Co., then the nation's largest keyboard instrument retailer, where he was Vice President in charge of Merchandising. He serves on the Board of Governors of the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco. Mr. Frey is also a writer; his work has been published in *The Mississippi Review*.

Director of Operations and Marketing, **Matthew Schumaker** studied music and philosophy as an undergraduate at Dartmouth and continued as a graduate student at Princeton, where he received an MA in music composition. While at Princeton, he took part in coordinating concert production for the university's new music ensemble. He subsequently studied composition in Holland with Louis Andriessen. He joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players staff in September, 2004.

Jessica **Pascucci**, Assistant Director for Development and Communications, graduated from Smith College with a B.A. in Music and Italian Studies. She studied at the Fiesole Music School and researched the conservatory and its connection with contemporary music as a Blumberg Fellow in Florence, Italy. A flutist of seventeen years, she has performed in music ensembles at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and Carnegie Hall. She joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players staff in September, 2005.

Gregory T. Kuhn, Sound Engineer, is a multi-disciplinary and multi-media artist freelancing in the performing and fine arts as sound engineer, designer, composer, installation designer, collaborator, and fine arts photographer. His works are experienced by audiences around the world often in the contexts of contemporary music and multi-media performances, and in new and experimental media exhibitions in galleries and museums. Upcoming projects in the performing arts include new works by Rinde Eckert, Paul Dresner, Joan Jeanrenaud, and Margaret Jenkins, and concerts by the California EAR Unit and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. His 1999 collaborative installation, “Mori: an Internet based Earthwork” will next be on exhibit at the Arlington (VA) Arts Center Nov. ‘05 - Jan. ‘06.

Robert Shumaker, Recording Engineer, has been recording the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players’ concerts and CD releases for over twenty years. Most recently, he recorded the ensemble’s album of compositions by Andrew Imbrie, and the ensemble’s James Newton album, *As the Sound of Many Waters*. Starting out as an engineer for rock concerts and recordings in San Francisco in the late 1960s, Shumaker went on to tour the Soviet Union twice with the Rova Saxophone Quartet, as well as making a tour of nine countries with the David Grisman Quartet. He has engineered over five hundred commercial recordings of artists ranging from Judy Collins to Diamanda Galas and from Van Morrison to Henry Brant. During the 1970s and ‘80s, he recorded the complete works of Conlon Nancarrow for 1750 Arch Records and Wergo. His work has been twice nominated for a Grammy Award.

Michael Ferriell Zbyszynski, Technical Consultant, is a composer, sound artist, performer, and teacher in the field of contemporary electroacoustic music. He holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. in composition from the University of California, Berkeley and studied at the Academy of Music in Cracow, Poland, on a Fulbright Grant. Playing flute, saxophones, clarinet, Yamaha WX-7, live electronics, or things made from coffee cans and PVC, he has appeared with Roscoe Mitchell, Myra Melford, David Wessel, the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, at the Oregon Bach Festival, the Montréal Jazz Festival, and as a soloist at venues from San Diego to Vancouver. He can be heard on the ARTSHIP recording label. Currently, he is a researcher at UC Berkeley’s Center for New Music and Audio Technologies.

Two works by **Mei-Fang Lin** are available on CD: *Interaction* appears both on the disc Music from Seamus, vol. 12 (Seamus) and on the Accademia Musicale Pescarese disc of Pierre Schaeffer International Computer Music Competition Third Edition Winners; *Internal Landscape* can be heard on Prix Scime 2000 (INA/GRM).

The piano music of **Karlheinz Stockhausen** has been recorded by Herbert Henck (Wergo) and by Bernard Wambach (Koch). True Stockhausen devotees will want to invest in the *Stockhausen—Complete Edition* recordings issued by the Stockhausen-Verlag. Other commercially available recordings include Singcircle’s performance of *Stimmung* (Hyperion) and recordings of *Kontakte* featuring David Tudor (Wergo) and William Winant (Ecstatic Peace), among others. In addition to Richard Toop’s entry in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, recent English-language literature on Stockhausen includes the essay/interview collection *Stockhausen on Music*, compiled by Robin Maconie (Martin Boyars, rpt. 2000), Maconie’s own *Other Planets: The Music of Karlheinz Stockhausen* (Scarecrow, 2005), and Toop’s translation of Michael Kurtz, *Stockhausen: A Biography* (Faber & Faber, 1993).

Although some CDs in **Salvatore Sciarrino**’s discography can be difficult to find on U. S. shelves, many are available online. *Infinito Nero* can be heard in performance (Kairos) by Ensemble Recherche with mezzo-soprano Sonia Turchetta, who has recorded more of Sciarrino’s vocal music with the composer’s own Alter Ego Ensemble (Stradivarius) on a CD called *Fiato or Breath*. Massimiliano Damerini’s recording of the first four Piano Sonatas has appeared on the Dynamic label, and additional piano works appear on a Cypres CD. In addition, Roberto Fabbriciani’s renderings of the solo flute music from the 1980’s can be heard on the Col Legno CD *Fabbrica degli Incantesimi*. Along with David Osmond-Smith’s article for the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, valuable English-language essays on Sciarrino’s music include Gavin Thomas, “The Poetics of Extremity,” *Musical Times* (April 1993) and Nicolas Hodges, “A volcano viewed from afar: The Music of Salvatore Sciarrino,” *Tempo* (October 1995).

—Beth E. Levy

SAN FRANCISCO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PLAYERS

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Roy Malan (1976), violin I
Susan Freier (1993), violin II
Stephen Harrison (1982), cello
Tod Brody (2001), flute
William Wohlmacher (1995), clarinet
Carey Bell (2004), clarinet
Rufus Olivier (1991), bassoon
Lawrence Ragent (1981), French horn
Charles Metzger (1976), trumpet
Hall Goff (1979), trombone

Peter Wahrhaftig (1989), tuba
Karen Gottlieb (1990), harp
Paul Binkley (1981), guitar
Julie Steinberg (1989), piano
William Winant (1988), percussion
Daniel Kennedy (1993), percussion
Christopher Froh (2003), percussion

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Michael F. Zbyszynski *Technical Consultant*
Gregory T. Kuhn *Sound Engineer*

**Dates indicate year of joining*

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