

April 30, 2019
for immediate release

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Calendar Editors Please Note

Who: Dresher | Davel Invented Instrument Duo
What: Unseen-Unheard
Three for Two by Paul Dresher (2019)
Premiere with video created by Naomie Kremer
Glimpsed From Afar by Paul Dresher (2006-2014)
Moving Parts by Paul Dresher (2012-18)
Out of Thin Air by Joel Davel (2014)
Where: ODC Theater
3153 17th St, San Francisco, CA 94110
When: Saturday June 15, 2019; 8 PM
Sunday June 16, 2019; 3 PM
Tickets: \$25 General - \$12 Students and Children - \$65 Reserved Seating
Box Office: www.odc.dance/unseen
(415) 863-9834
Concert info: www.dresherensemble.org
Venue Info: www.odc.dance/perf-faq



The **Dresher | Davel Invented Instrument Duo**, formed in 2001 and after many national and international tours, will present of **their first full-length concerts** in San Francisco. **The program includes a world premiere of a new work by Dresher** as well as existing Duo repertoire. The instruments were created by Paul Dresher, Daniel Schmidt and the pioneering electronic music inventor Don Buchla. After the concert, the audience will be invited on-stage to play the instruments and interact with the performers.

Performing live on a unique set of huge invented musical instruments, the electro-acoustic duo of acclaimed composer, performer & instrument inventor Paul Dresher and percussionist-extraordinaire Joel Davel consistently generates excitement and wonder!

Playing the 15-foot Quadrachord, the 10-foot Hurdy Grande (both invented and built by Dresher and Daniel Schmidt) and Don Buchla's magical Marimba Lumina, Dresher and Davel create lush textures and rhythmically propulsive grooves that fascinate the ear and the eye. Exploring unique sound-colors and enhanced by live digital looping, this electro-acoustic duo creates complex sonic layers as rich as a full orchestra.

Audiences are sonically immersed and visually engaged by both the sight and sound of these sculptural inventions and by the energetic and imaginative choreography of Dresher and Davel's physical interaction with the instruments and with one another.

The Dresher/Davel duo has performed to enthusiastic audiences across the US and in Australia. Concerts have been performed at Disney Hall (opening for the LA Philharmonic), Carnegie/Zankel Hall, Bard College, Detroit Institute of Art, Symphony Space, UT Austin, the Bowling Green Festival of New American Music, University of Southern California, University of Maryland, Penn State University, the Sydney Conservatorium and the Canberra International Music Festival in Australia.

THE MUSIC

World Premiere: *Three for Two*: Paul Dresher – 2019, **with video created by Naomie Kremer specifically for this concert.** Dresher is composing a new work that for the first time combines his two primary concert music inventions, the Quadrachord and the Hurdy Grande, both played Dresher and percussionist Joel Davel, who will also play Don Buchla's invention, the Marimba Lumina. Both instruments will be tuned in entirely new ways to create new harmonic possibilities for the composition. Painter/video artist Naomie Kremer is creating the video from source video and imagery of the invented instruments. The title is simply a reference to the three instruments played by two performers.

Glimpsed From Afar (2006-2014): for two invented instruments —Paul Dresher & Daniel Schmidt's Quadrachord and Don Buchla's Marimba Lumina. The work premiered at the San Francisco Jewish Music Festival in 2006 and continued its evolution until it was recorded in 2016. Its creation and development is indebted to percussionist Joel Davel, whose ideas and performance have been integral to both the composition and performance of the work.

Moving Parts (2012-18) – for Hurdy Grande (Dresher & Schmidt's invention inspired in part by the medieval European folk instrument the Hurdy Gurdy) and Don Buchla's Marimba Lumina. The title of the work refers both to its musical form as well as to the unique mechanics of the Hurdy Grande, whose sound is produced largely by the mechanical bowing of the strings by a motor-drive wooden wheel.

The form of both these compositions is derived in part from such non-classical traditions as jazz and certain world music traditions, reflecting Dresher's musical roots improvised idioms like blues, improvised music and North Indian Classical music. While not sounding like any of these, these works both combine a fixed overall form, a sequence of contrasting structures consisting of multiple live-recorded loops upon which both performers freely improvise.

Out of Thin Air – Joel Davel (2014) for Buchla Lightning

Out of Thin Air draws from early autobiographical sound and music experiences: from my first percussion instruments to my brother's cassette tape remix of "The Hustle" titled "42 that's rights". Included is an excerpt from a piece for choreographer Allyson Greene to commemorate her modern dance life in New York. A varied work, there is an emphasis on the transformation of timbres as a bridge between virtual instrument environments. A note about the technology: Two wands held by the performer are tracked optically from infrared light emanating from their tip. Each wand is tracked independently and therefore each hand is often programmed to perform different functions. Sounds are initiated or altered with pedals, wand button presses, and virtual strikes that vary according to the wands' x-y position in space.

THE COMPOSERS

Paul Dresher is an internationally active composer noted for his ability to integrate diverse musical influences into his own coherent and unique personal style that integrates his formative experience with American blues, West African drumming, North Indian classical music and the music of Java and Bali. He pursues many forms of musical expression including experimental opera/music theater, chamber and orchestral composition, live instrumental electro-acoustic music, musical instrument invention, and scores for theater and dance.

A recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship for 2006, he has received commissions from the Library of Congress, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Spoleto Festival USA, the Kronos Quartet, the SF Symphony, Zeitgeist, SF Ballet, Walker Arts Center, and the Seattle Chamber Players. He has performed or had his works performed throughout the world at venues including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Alice Tully Hall, the Festival d'Automne in Paris, the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, and the Minnesota Opera.

Percussionist **Joel Davel** enjoys the diversity of his career, employing his classical training toward his love of adventurous new music, jazz, rock, and electronic music. This includes recording credits with groups led by electronic diva Amy X Neuburg (2 albums), violinist Kaila Flexer (2 albums), jazz guitarist Jack West (4 albums), percussionist William Winant, composer Guillermo Galindo, and guitarist David Tanenbaum. Davel is best known for his work with composer-performer, Paul Dresher. Davel is one-half of the Dresher Davel Invented Instrument Duo and a long-time member of the Dresher Ensemble Electro-Acoustic Band, an ensemble that has collaborated directly with dozens of today's most innovative composers.

THE VIDEO ARTIST



NAOMIE KREMER (*photo courtesy the artist*), **Video Artist**, is a painter, multi-media artist, and stage designer. Her work has been exhibited widely in the US and abroad. Her video based set designs include *Tristan and Isolde*, performed at the Herbst Theater, San Francisco, in 2018, *Lucia Berlin Stories*, performed by Word for Word Theater Company in San Francisco and Paris, France, in 2018; *Alcina*, by GF Handel, performed in Acre, Israel by French Baroque orchestra Les Talens Lyriques, in 2016; the world premiere opera *The Secret Garden* co-commissioned by San Francisco Opera and Cal Performances in 2013; *Light Moves*, a collaboration with Margaret Jenkins Dance

Company, with Paul Drescher's music, in 2011-12; and *Bluebeard's Castle* by Béla Bartók, commissioned by the Berkeley Opera, in 2008. In 2016, she completed a 40-minute film, *In the Beginning was Desire*, with documentary filmmaker David Grubin, for which she conceived and created all the visuals.

Kremer's work has been exhibited in the US and internationally, and is in collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Berkeley Art Museum, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and the US Embassy in Beijing, China. She has taught and lectured widely including at San Francisco Art Institute, California College of the Arts, the Syracuse University program in Florence, Italy, and the Ruskin School of Art at Oxford University. She is represented in San Francisco by Modernism Gallery. www.naomiekremer.com

ABOUT THE INVENTED INSTRUMENTS:

Quadrachord (*photo courtesy Ian Umeda*)



The Quadrachord has a total string length of 160 inches, four strings of differing gauges but of equal length and an electric bass pick-up next to each of the two bridges. The instrument can be plucked like a guitar, bowed like cello, played like a slide guitar, prepared like a piano and drummed on like a percussion instrument. Because of the extremely long string length (relative to our conventional bowed and plucked instruments) and very low open string/fundamental pitches, the instrument is capable

of easily and accurately playing the harmonic series up to the 36th partial and higher. Thus, it is a remarkable tool for exploring alternative tuning systems based on the harmonic series.

In live performance, the instrument is typically used in conjunction with live digital looping and various signal processing devices (most importantly a programmable graphic equalizer) that together allow Drescher and Davel to build up complex multi-track layers, each of which is defined by a distinct timbre and spectral characteristics.

Hurdy Grande (photo courtesy Ian Umeda)



The Hurdy Grande was inspired by the medieval European folk instrument, the hurdy gurdy. About the size and proportions of a guitar (and often seen in paintings of folk revels by Bruegel or, in an imaginary giant form in Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*) the unique feature of the traditional hurdy gurdy is that its strings are mechanically bowed with a hand-cranked wooden wheel.

However, our instrument is much larger, with a string length about 4 times that of the traditional hurdy gurdy and to free up both hands for more musically engaging tasks, it has a variable speed motor that turns the wooden wheel that bows the strings. This addition makes possible many unique performance techniques that allow a single (or more) performer(s) to play in a fashion like the piano - using both hands to create multiple independent melodies, chords and/or rhythms, something that is impossible on any traditional bowed stringed instrument.

The instrument was invented and built in collaboration with Daniel Schmidt, with essential help from Matt Heckert. The prototype of the Hurdy Grande was created for my music theater work *Schick Machine*. This work, a collaboration with director/writer Rinde Eckert, mechanical sound artist Matt Heckert and performer/percussionist extraordinaire Steven Schick, premiered in March 2009 at Stanford University after a three-year period of collaboration and construction.

As is always the case with new instruments, the prototype served the essential purpose of showing us what we needed to change in our initial design. With the support of a grant from the Center for Cultural Innovation, in 2010, Daniel and I returned to the shop and created the 2nd generation of the instrument. The instrument's design continues to evolve and a 3rd iteration is planned in the near future.

Marimba Lumina (photo courtesy Ian Umeda)



An instrument design by synthesizer pioneer Don Buchla in collaboration with Joel Davel and Mark Goldstein, Marimba Lumina is a sophisticated electronic instrument that has more expressive control than a typical electronic keyboard. Modeled somewhat after its acoustic namesake, it is a dynamically sensitive electronic mallet controller that brings an extended vocabulary and range of expression to the mallet instrument family. Marimba Lumina's playing surface includes a traditionally arrayed set of electronic bars.

Each bar is made up of two overlapping antennas that receive proximity information from each of the four mallets. This allows the Marimba Lumina to respond to new performance variables such as position along the length of each bars. In addition, each mallet is tuned to a unique frequency which allows one to program different instrumental responses for each mallet. This all augments the potential for expressive control with easily implemented pitch, volume and timbre modulation.

Buchla Lightning Another invention by Don Buchla on which Joel Davel also assisted, Lightning is a specialized controller that senses the position and movement of handheld wands and transforms this information into expressive control of electronic musical instrumentation. Incredibly versatile, the performer can control multiple sounds simultaneously using only the two wireless wands. When working with Lightning, a composition is the result of the programming of the Lightning itself and how it's messages are turned into sound by an electronic sound module, synthesizer or computer.

THE ORGANIZATION

Musical Traditions believes deeply in the transformative power of artistic expression. For 35 years, the organization has been a creative force and active member of the San Francisco Bay Area as well as the national arts community. Our overarching goal is to produce innovative and engaging performances that reach for the highest artistic standards. We create, produce and tour works of new opera/music theater; we commission and perform new chamber music and we collaborate with other artists and arts organizations;

Of equal organizational importance, we provide essential services to the creative performing arts community. We support individual artist's creative work by providing technical, financial, and advisory assistance, we provide both short and long term below-market rehearsal studio space and equipment rentals to over 60 Bay Area artists and/or organizations each year. And through the Drescher Ensemble Artists Residency, we provide free, multi-week studio residencies to Northern California artists working in the time-based arts. In 2019, we have initiated two entirely new intimate and informal performance series –In Studio Performances and the West Oakland Sessions.

FUNDING

This concert is funded in parts by San Francisco Grant for the Arts, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Bernard Osher Foundation, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Musical Traditions' Board of Directors, and individual donors.

High-definition pictures are available at:
<https://www.dresherensemble.org/performances/>



Dresher-Davel-Duo-at-Hurdy-Grande_photo-by-Ian-Umeda



Dresher-Davel-Duo-at-CSMA_photo-by-Sharon-Kenney



Dresher-Davel-Duo-at-USC_Photo-courtesy-of-artists



Dresher-Davel-Duo-at-BAMPFA_Photo-courtesy-of-artists

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