

New Performance Traditions | Paul Dresher Ensemble

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newperformancetraditions.org/schick

<http://www.zspace.org/schick>

Note: EXPANDED BIOS follow release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Performance Traditions & Paul Dresher Ensemble Presents The Final 4 Performances of **Schick Machine**

Featuring Virtuoso Percussionist Steven Schick
Rinde Eckert - text & direction
Music by Paul Dresher
Invented Instruments by Paul Dresher & Daniel Schmidt
Mechanical Sound Sculptures by Matt Heckert
Visual Design by Tom Ontiveros

December 15 -17th, 2023

**Z Space's Steindler Stage
450 Florida St. San Francisco 94110**

The Paul Dresher Ensemble Presents the final 4 performances of its legendary music theater production *Schick Machine* December 15 -17th on Z Space's Steindler Stage. Directed by Rinde Eckert, virtuoso percussionist Steven Schick inhabits a fantastical stage filled with huge invented instruments and sound sculptures – including the Hurdy Grande, the Tumbler, the Field of Flowers, and the Peacock (a deconstructed pipe organ). **After the performance, the audience is invited onstage to play the inventions and explore a unique kind of “maker” sound & visual environment.** Following the production's California premiere in March 2009 *Schick Machine* has toured across the country with a SRO run in Hong Kong as well. **At its debut the production was described as “fresh and surprising...often mind-blowing” Mark Swed LA Times.**

As Schick wanders amidst a stage set filled with very large invented instruments– he draws the audience into a magical place filled with creative potential. Quickly the audience relinquishes its expectations about what an instrument should look like, how it should be played, and what sounds it can make, and is enticed into a sonorous world of continual aural and visual surprises.

“Every percussionist has a secret life. Working with Paul Dresher and Rinde Eckert; Daniel Schmidt, Matt Heckert, and Tom Ontiveros has been an illumination of the id of percussion, it's secret passions and guilty pleasures.” remarks Steven Schick.

“In making a concert/theater work with Steven Schick, we started with an understanding of Steve's virtuosic skills,” remarks director Rinde Eckert. *“We move with Steve, losing*

ourselves in the moment, in a world that won't let us remain oblivious or ecstatic, a world that disturbs our sleep, and wakes us from the dream."

In ***Schick Machine*** while exploring the visually extraordinary stage, Steve has unexpected encounters with both tiny noise-making objects and the huge invented instruments, luring the audience into a magical world full of musical surprises including "a dazzling electrified metal hoop that seems to want to spin and wow forever, an organ mounted like the Aztec rays of the sun, a four-foot wide spinning "cymbal" disk and assorted woodblocks that bounce around in space!"

New Performance Traditions | Paul Dresher Ensemble *Schick Machine*

December 15-17 on Z Space's Steindler Stage,
450 Florida St. San Francisco 94110

Friday & Saturday December 15 & 16 at 8pm

Saturday & Sunday family matinees Dec. 16 & 17 at 3pm

Tickets: <http://www.zspace.org/schick>

Evening Performances \$25, children age 15 & under: \$12.50

Family Matinee Performances: \$20, children age 15 & under: \$10

Box Office: 415-626-0453 Tickets <http://www.zspace.org/schick>

Hi Rez Photos & Video Clips: <http://newperformancetraditions.org/schick>

Schick Machine was collaboratively created by a multidisciplinary team that includes composer/instrument builder Paul Dresher, writer/director Rinde Eckert, percussionist/performer Steven Schick, lighting and visual designer Tom Ontiveros, instrument inventor/educator Daniel Schmidt, and mechanical sound artist Matt Heckert. *Schick Machine* features percussionist Schick exploring a visually compelling world of mechanical devices, invented instruments and seemingly infinite sonic possibilities.

Paul Dresher describes the collaborative process: *"We set out to create a tightly structured and coherent theatrical entity and at the same time to honor the inspiration from which all music has evolved: the in-the-moment pleasures of creating and exploring the richness of sounds produced by striking, plucking, bowing and blowing on resonant objects. In *Schick Machine* we are vividly reminded that "play" is truly at the core of the idea of 'playing music'."*

The Collaborators:

Paul Dresher is a renowned experimental musician, instrument builder and composer. Dresher pushes the limits of contemporary music with works of new opera and music theater, electro-acoustic chamber music, and collaborative scores for dance, film, drama and the visual arts. A prolific composer and active performer, Paul Dresher is uniquely able to integrate different musical influences into a coherent and remarkably personal style.

The virtuoso percussionist **Steven Schick** is a performer who has been described as "a wizard, a master, a roshi of percussion." Schick turns percussion into a benign and exquisitely elegant form of martial art." Schick has been music director of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus and artistic director of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. In 2015 he was music director of the Ojai Festival.

The multi-talented and acclaimed **Rinde Eckert's** Opera / New Music Theatre productions have toured worldwide. Eckert was a 2007 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama and an inaugural Doris

Duke Artist in 2012. He received the 2009 Alpert Award in the Arts for Theatre, a 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship, and the 2005 American Academy of Arts and Letters Marc Blitzstein Award.

Daniel Schmidt is a musical instrument designer, inventor, and composer. Schmidt's inventions have been played and exhibited internationally creating new genres as well as the instruments. He has collaborated with Paul Dresher for many years. They have collaboratively created the Quadrachord and the Hurdy Grande, as well as the instruments for *Sound Stage*, *Schick Machine* and their invented instrument installation work *Sound Maze*.

Matt Heckert, a performance-sound artist and engineer, is one of the founding directors of Survival Research Laboratories (SRL). Heckert developed a group of sound producing machines (Mechanical Sound Orchestra) that has performed throughout the United States and Europe.

Tom Ontiveros the production and lighting designer, has focused on visual design for new and premier works by Paul Dresher, Mark Grey, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music (Santa Cruz Civic); playwrights Naomi Iizuka, Charles Mee and Jessica Hagedorn; choreographers Allyson Green, Yolande Snaith, Mark Haim, and Scott Wells

Schick Machine was commissioned by Stanford Lively Arts and Meyer Sound Labs and produced with generous support from the Creative Work Fund, Phyllis Wattis Foundation, Argosy Fund for Contemporary Music, William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, Bernard Osher Foundation and Meet The Composer/Commissioning Music USA Program. The composition of the score was supported by Dresher's Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship in Music Composition in 2006-07.

The Paul Dresher Ensemble believes deeply in the transformative power of artistic expression. Like the best of American culture, the Ensemble's work is grounded in experimentation and exploration, and embodies a distinctly entrepreneurial spirit. For nearly four decades the Ensemble has been a creative force and active member of the San Francisco Bay Area as well as the national arts community.

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CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

New Performance Traditions | Paul Dresher Ensemble presents the music theater production *Schick Machine* December 15-17 on Z Space's Steindler Stage, 450 Florida St. In *Schick Machine*, *virtuoso percussionist Steven Schick inhabits a fantastical stage filled with huge invented instruments and sound sculptures – including the Hurdy Grande, the Tumbler, the Field of Flowers, and the Peacock* (part of a deconstructed pipe organ). Luring the audience into a magical world full of musical surprises while exploring this visually extraordinary stage, he has unexpected encounters with both the huge invented instruments and tiny noise-making objects.

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BACKGROUND

EXPANDED BIOS: Collaborative Team

Percussionist, conductor, and author **Steven Schick** was born in Iowa and raised in a farming family. For forty years, he has championed contemporary music by commissioning or premiering more than one hundred new works. Schick is music director of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus and artistic director of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. He was the music director of the 2015 Ojai Festival. He maintains a lively schedule of guest conducting, including recent appearances with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble Modern, and the Asko/Schönberg Ensemble. Among his acclaimed publications include a book, "The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams," and numerous recordings of contemporary percussion music, including a 3 CD set of the complete percussion music of Iannis Xenakis (Mode) and a companion recording of the early percussion music of Karlheinz Stockhausen in 2014 (Mode). Steven Schick is a Distinguished Professor of Music and holds the Reed Family Presidential Chair at the University of California, San Diego.

The multi-talented **Rinde Eckert** is an acclaimed writer, composer, librettist, musician, performer, and director. His virtuosic command of gesture, language, and song takes this total theatre artist beyond the traditional boundaries of what a 'play,' a 'dance piece,' an 'opera' or a 'musical' might be. Eckert creates solo work, chamber pieces, and through-composed operas with larger casts in collaboration with choreographers, composers, directors, and new music ensembles. His Opera / New Music Theatre productions have toured throughout the U.S. and to major European and Asian festivals. Eckert's plays and theater writing credits include *Highway Ulysses*, *Horizon*, *Orpheus X*, and the award-winning *And God Created Great Whales*, with three off-Broadway runs 227 performances, with the original cast and director. His work has received Drama Desk nominations and the Lucille Lortel Award. Rinde Eckert's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Pericles*, directed by David Schweizer, premiered in April 2016 at Two River Theatre in New Jersey. Current theater and music projects in which he performs include *My Lai* with the Kronos Quartet, the Beth Morrison Production *Aging Magician* with Paola Prestini and: *Five Beasts* with composer/performer Ned Rothenberg and beatbox artist Adam Matta. Rinde Eckert was the 2007 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama. An inaugural Doris Duke Artist, he has also received the Alpert Award in the Arts for Theatre, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Marc Blitzstein Award.

Paul Dresher is an internationally active composer noted for his ability to integrate diverse musical influences into his own coherent style. 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 in Composition in 2006-07, he has received commissions from the Library of Congress, St Paul Chamber Orchestra, Spoleto Festival USA, Kronos Quartet, SF Symphony, SF Ballet, Present Music, Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, Brenda Way/ODC Dance and Chamber Music America. He works have been performed at the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, the Festival d'automne in Paris, the Other Minds Festival and at Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival.

Recent works include, *Global Moves* (2022) and *Breathing at the Boundaries* (2020) both created with Rinde Eckert and the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, *Crazy Eights & Fractured Symmetries* (2016) and *Concerto for Quadrachord & Orchestra* (2012) both commissioned by the Berkeley Symphony, *Family Matters* (2014) - for TwoSense - cellist Ashley Bathgate and pianist Lisa Moore and a major piano work – *Two Entwined* (2011) - commissioned by Sarah Cahill and premiered at the Spoleto Festival USA.

In 2009 at Stanford University, Dresher premiered *Schick Machine*, a music theater work performed on a set comprised entirely of invented musical instruments/sound sculptures created in collaboration

with writer/director Rinde Eckert, percussionist/performer Steven Schick, instrument builder Daniel Schmidt and mechanical sound artist Matt Heckert. The work has been produced in Hong Kong and at the Krannert Center in Urbana, IL, UCLA, UCSD, UC Davis, and the Breckenridge International Festival. www.dresherensemble.org

Matt Heckert (Mechanical Sound Artist) has been working as a performance-sound artist and an engineer since 1978. He is one of the founding directors of Survival Research Laboratories (SRL), a trio of artists including Mark Pauline and Eric Werner, that pioneered the use of machines, robots and pyrotechnics in performance art. His contribution to SRL's spectacular machine performances included the creation of various remote and radio controlled robot vehicles as well as the creation of elaborate and innovative soundtracks incorporating everything from industrial noise to dialogue from b-movies. SRL staged performances in San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, New York City, Copenhagen Denmark and Amsterdam Holland. In 1989 he conceived and developed a group of sound producing machines known as the Mechanical Sound Orchestra. With Mechanical Sound Orchestra performances all sound is produced by mechanical action of the machines with no use of sampled or pre-recorded sound. Heckert performed with Mechanical Sound Orchestra through out the United States and Europe in festivals and galleries including the "Ultima Oslo Contemporary Music Festival" Oslo, Norway, Germans Van Eck Gallery NYC, "Sonambiente-Festival for Eyes and Ears" Berlin Germany, "Performing Bodies and Smart Machines Series" Whitney Museum of American Art

Daniel Schmidt (Instrument Inventor & Builder) is a musical instrument designer, inventor, composer and educator. He has collaborated with Paul Dresher for many years. In the last decade they have created the Quadrachord as well as the instruments for *Sound Stage*. Daniel is well known for his contribution to creating the genre known as American Gamelan, broadening the range and timbral palette of traditional Indonesian designs and making the instruments more well suited to the western compositional approach. Daniel has just finished a permanent installation of unique instruments at Children's Fairyland in Oakland. His inventions have been exhibited at the Exploratorium in San Francisco, Akademie der Kunst in Berlin, the San Francisco Art Institute, New Langton Arts, EXPO '86 in Vancouver, Dartington College in England, and the Cornish Institute in Seattle. He has built musical instruments for John Cage with the Boston Symphony, John Adams and the San Francisco Symphony, and worked closely with Lou Harrison on a number of projects. He has long been a leader in field of American Gamelan & Javanese music, and in that capacity has directed performances or had residencies at the Oakland Museum, the Exploratorium, New Music America in San Francisco and Los Angeles, UC Berkeley, California Institute of the Arts, and the Berliner Künstler Program (DAAD).

Tom Ontiveros (Production & Lighting Design) has focused on visual design for new and premier works by composers including Paul Dresher, Mark Grey, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music (Santa Cruz Civic); playwrights Naomi Iizuka, Charles Mee and Jessica Hagedorn; choreographers Allyson Green, Yolande Snaith, Mark Haim, and Scott Wells. Touring work includes productions in The Holland Festival, The International Festival of Arts & Ideas, and The International Theatre Festival in Cluj, Romania as well as national tours with The Paul Dresher Ensemble for *Ravenshead*, *Slow Fire*, and *Soundstage*. Other collaborations include works with Michael Grief, Bob Balaban, Eduardo Machado and Erin Mee.

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