

The Paul Dresher Ensemble

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Note: Bios/Background follow release

The Paul Dresher Ensemble Presents

Schick Machine

Writer and Director Rinde Eckert
Virtuoso Percussionist Steven Schick Performing
With Huge Invented Instruments And Sound Sculptures

September 23-25
Z Space's Main Stage
450 Florida St., SF 94110

The Paul Dresher Ensemble Presents the music theater production *Schick Machine* September 23-25 on San Francisco's Z Space Main Stage prior to tour. 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 engage and explore a kind of audio “maker” sound and visual domain. The production was described at its debut as “*fresh and surprising...often mind-blowing*” LA Times

Steven Schick remarks “*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.*”

While exploring this 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!” “*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.*”

**The Paul Dresher Ensemble Presents *Schick Machine*,
September 23-25** Z Space, 470 Florida St., SF 94110

Fri. Sept. 23, 8 PM: Opening night reception

Sat. Sept. 24, 3 PM & 8 PM Sun. Sept. 25 3 PM

After every performance, audience is invited onstage to engage & explore the invented instruments.

For general information: <http://www.zspace.org>

Tickets: \$20-25,\$10-12.50 students, children, seniors

Purchase: 866.811.4111 or at www.zspace.org

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

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. To recall that "play" is truly at the core of the idea of playing of music."*

As he wanders amidst a stage set filled with very large invented instruments— Schick 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.

The Collaborators:

Paul Dresher is 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 is 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. In the last decade they have co-created the Quadrachord as well as the instruments for *Sound Stage*.

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.

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

The Paul Dresher Ensemble Presents *Schick Machine* September 23-25 on Z Space's Main Stage, 470 Florida St. in San Francisco. 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 (a deconstructed pipe organ). While exploring this visually extraordinary stage, he 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.

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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-fifty 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 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 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 collaborations 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, which had 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 beat box 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 and unique personal 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 for 2006-07, he has received commissions from the Library of Congress, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Spoleto Festival USA, the Kronos Quartet, the San Francisco Symphony, Zeitgeist, San Francisco Ballet, Seattle Chamber Players, Present Music, and Chamber Music America. He has performed or had his works performed throughout the world at venues including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Festival d'Automne in Paris, the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, and the Minnesota Opera. Dresher is currently at work on a commission from the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra to premiere in October 2016. And for the 2016-17 academic year, Dresher has been appointed the Libra Professor at the University of Southern Maine, where, in collaboration with Rinde Eckert, he will lead the creation of Molded by the Flow – a multi-disciplinary project involving the faculty and students from the Departments of Music, Theater and Visual Arts. The work will premiere in April 2017. Recent works include Family Matters (2014) - a duo for TwoSense - cellist Ashley Bathgate and pianist Lisa Moore, Concerto for Quadrachord & Orchestra (2012) composed for conductor Joana Carneiro and the Berkeley Symphony, a major piano work – Elapsed Time (2011) - commissioned by pianist Sarah Cahill and premiered at the Spoleto Festival, and Schick Machine (2009). 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 Drescher 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 Drescher, 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 Drescher 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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