
The Paul Drescher Ensemble Production of THE TYRANT with John Duykers*

Artist Biographies: Paul Drescher, Composer; John Duykers, Tenor; Jim Lewis, Librettist; Melissa Weaver, Director

PAUL DRESHER, Composer

Paul Drescher is a composer who is internationally 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 and music theater, chamber and orchestral composition, live instrumental electro-acoustic music performances, musical instrument invention, and scores for theater, dance, and film.

He has received commissions from the Library of Congress, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Spoleto Festival USA, the Kronos Quartet, the San Francisco Symphony, California EAR Unit, Zeitgeist, Walker Arts Center, University of Iowa, Meet the Composer, Seattle Chamber Players, Present Music, National Flute Association, and the American Music Theater Festival. He has performed or had his works performed throughout North America, Asia, and Europe at venues including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Munich State Opera, the Festival d'Automne in Paris, the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, the Minnesota Opera, Arts Summit Indonesia '95, and Festival Interlink in Japan.

As part of his Guggenheim Fellowship for 2006-2007 and with the support of Meet the Composer, Drescher is creating an evening-length solo music theater work for percussionist Steven Schick using large-scale invented musical instruments. Drescher has also been commissioned to compose the score for the Berkeley Repertory Theater's production of *To The Lighthouse*, adapted by Adele Shank from the Virginia Woolf novel and directed by Les Waters. This work, for string quartet and voices, will premiere in February of 2007.

Drescher's most recent successes include the Cleveland Opera's premiere (in May 2006) of the final version of the critically-acclaimed solo chamber opera *The Tyrant*, featuring tenor John Duykers. This work, first presented in Seattle in 2005 has already had productions in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Santa Rosa and San Francisco, all to great critical acclaim. Also in May of 2006, the Drescher Ensemble performed the premiere of his score for *A Slipping Glimpse*, the new evening-length collaboration with the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company involving dancers from both the USA and India. This work will be touring the US and India in future seasons.

In November 2004, his contemporary chamber group, the six-member Paul Drescher Ensemble Electro-Acoustic Band, made its Carnegie Hall debut, performing a concert of Drescher's chamber works as part of the "In Your Ear Festival" curated by John Adams, in conjunction with the New Albion release of Drescher's CD *Cage Machine*. In March of 2005 the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra premiered Drescher's *Still, Rise, Fall, Again*, a commission from the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation.

Other recently completed composing projects include *Snow in June*, a collaboration with playwright Charles Mee and director Chen Shi-Zheng, commissioned by the American Repertory Theatre; and a collaboration with former Kronos Quartet cellist Joan Jeanrenaud on his cello concerto *Unequal Distemperament*. In 2001 Drescher built and composed *Sound Stage*, a music theater work performed on a set comprised entirely of very large-scale invented musical instruments. *Sound Stage* was commissioned and performed with the new music ensemble *Zeitgeist* (with support from the Walker Art Center) and was directed by Rinde Eckert. Drescher has also worked extensively with many choreographers including Margaret Jenkins, Brenda Way/ODC San Francisco, Nancy Karp & Dancers, Wendy Rogers Dance Company, and Allyson Green Dance.

Born in Los Angeles in 1951, Drescher received his BA in Music from UC Berkeley and his MA in Composition from UC San Diego where he studied with Robert Erickson, Roger Reynolds, Pauline Oliveros and Bernard

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Rands. He has had a longtime interest in the music of Asia and Africa, studying Ghanaian drumming with C.K. and Kobla Ladzekpo, Hindustani classical music with Nikhil Banerjee as well as Balinese and Javanese music. Recordings of his works are available on the Lovely Music, New World (with Ned Rothenberg), CRI, Music and Arts, 0.0. Discs, BMG/Catalyst, MinMax, Starkland, and New Albion labels. (June 2006)

John Duykers, Tenor

Internationally acclaimed tenor, John Duykers, made his professional operatic debut with Seattle Opera. Since then he has appeared with many of the leading opera companies of the world including The Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Royal Opera Covent Garden, Netherlands Opera, the Grand Theatre of Geneva, Frankfurt Opera, Opera de Marseille, the Canadian Opera Company, Santa Fe Opera, Los Angeles Opera, San Diego Opera and the Opera Company of Philadelphia.

He is particularly known for his performances of contemporary music, having sung in nearly 70 contemporary operas including 41 world premieres. He created the role of Mao Tse Tung in John Adams' Nixon in China which he performed throughout the world. He has been a frequent performer at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and likewise has appeared regularly with San Francisco Opera and Los Angeles Opera where he performs this season. John Duykers has had a close association with a number of contemporary composers, notably John Adams and Philip Glass. He sang the premiere of Glass' In The Penal Colony and 2001 and Galileo Galilei in 2002.

John Duykers has appeared frequently with symphony orchestras throughout the United States including the National Symphony Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Kansas City Symphony, Tri-Cities Symphony, Sacramento Symphony, Santa Rosa Symphony and the San Jose Symphony. His appearances at major festivals have included Aspen, the American Music Theater Festival, the Gaudeamus Music Week, Kaitheater Festival, the Brooklyn Academy of Music's 'Next Wave' Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, the London International Festival of Theatre, Internationale Teaterfestival in Copenhagen, Edinburgh Festival, the Festival Internacional de Teatro of Granada and Juneau Jazz and Classics.

Upcoming performances include premieres of Bitter Harvest by Kurt Rohde for Kent Nagano and the Berkeley Symphony, a new version of the opera KALI by Tony Prabowo, Jarrad Powell and Goenawan Mohamed; and Janacek's Cunning Little Vixen with San Francisco Opera in June.

John Duykers has received critical acclaim in numerous productions of George Coates Performance Works, the Paul Dresher Ensemble and the A.Ga.Pe Performance Group which have been seen on the world's most important contemporary music and theater stages. He is currently developing an opera program for the School of Music at the California Institute of the Arts.

**John Duykers appears courtesy of California Artists Management*

Jim Lewis, Librettist

Jim Lewis received TONY and Drama Desk nominations for "Best Book for a Musical" for his adaptation of Gabriel Garcia Marquez' Chronicle of a Death Foretold (Broadway, 1995). Also w/ Graciela Daniele, he wrote Dangerous Games (Broadway 1990), and the Off-Broadway sensation Tango Apasionado (Westbeth, 1988). His libretto for Ballet Hispanico's dance/theater piece Nightclub is currently on tour nationally. He created the "Titles and Narration" for Philip Glass' Bessie-winning dance/opera Les Enfants Terribles. And his translation of Ionesco's The Chairs and his adaptation of Ibsen's Lady From The Sea have been produced by theaters around the country. As Production Dramaturg, he has helped create and shape numerous works, including White Oak Dance Project's PastFORWARD with Mikhail Baryshnikov; Anna Deavere Smith's House Arrest; Bill T. Jones' Dream On Monkey Mountain; the WOZA AFRICA Festival at Lincoln Center; the OBIE winning revival of Granville-Barker's Waste; and last year's Lortel and Drama Desk nominated production of Cymbeline with director Bart Sher. Jim was Program Director for the American Center (Paris), and Resident Dramaturg at The Guthrie w/ Garland Wright. Most recently, he worked with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company on their 20th Anniversary production of The Phantom Project at BAM (January 2004).

Melissa Weaver, Director

Melissa Weaver graduated summa cum laude in 1977 from United States International University's School of Performing and Visual Arts in San Diego and continued with graduate studies in stage direction/ lighting at the University of Texas at Austin. There in 1980 she met John Duykers, a guest artist performing Eight Songs for a Mad King by Peter Maxwell Davies. They started a partnership staging Mad King and Henze's El Cimarron, which was given the Los Angeles Times Beckmesser Award for Outstanding Contemporary Performance in 1983.

Weaver and Duykers remain dedicated to the creation of new opera theater work. In 1991 they formed Agape Performance Group, with which Weaver conceived and directed A.ga.pe, Last Stand, Trespass Knot (with composer Miguel Frasconi and choreographer Jess Curtis), and The Winchester Rosary (with writer/ performer Amanda Moody). Recently, Weaver has remounted the popular and critically acclaimed Serial Murderess, which received the 2001 Dean Goodman Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre and the San Francisco Bay Guardian's Best of 2000 Upstage/Downstage Award.

Weaver directed Rinde Eckert's The Gardening of Thomas D, which toured the US and Europe, and directed Eckert in Dry Land Divine at Zellerbach Onstage and at DTW in New York. She directed the experimental dance opera Kali (with Indonesian poet Gonewan Mohammad, composers Jarrad Powell and Tony Prabowo, the New Jakarta Ensemble, and tenor Duykers), which was produced at On the Boards in Seattle and remounted in Europe last year. She recently directed the premiere of Howard Hersh's The History Lesson, featuring soprano Kerry Walsh and presented at the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento), Erling Wold's Sub Pontio Pilato, Ravel's L'Enfant et les Sortilèges, Vivian Fine's The Women in the Garden (Berkeley Opera), and Seven Small Operas (Long Beach Opera). Most recently, she staged Orff's Die Kluge at the Ojai Festival, with Kent Nagano and singers from the Los Angeles Opera.

In Fall 2005, Weaver's staged oratorio Bitter Harvest (featuring Duykers, two soloists, and chorus), a collaboration with Moody and composer Kurt Rohde, was premiered by Berkeley Symphony. Currently she is collaborating with composer Erling Wold, writer Douglas Kearney and designer Frieder Weiss on a new solo opera for Duykers, to premiere in 2007 at Intersection Theater. She is also working on a new theater piece written and performed by Amanda Moody entitled D'Arc.

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