



**NADJA SALERNO-SONNENBERG AND NEW CENTURY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
PRESENT WEST COAST PREMIERE BY FEATURED COMPOSER DEREK BERMEL
MAY 28-31**

San Francisco, CA – May 6, 2015 – Music Director Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and New Century Chamber Orchestra conclude the 2014-2015 season May 28-31 with the West Coast premiere of *Murmurations* by Featured Composer Derek Bermel. Commissioned by a New Century-led consortium of ensembles, including the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, River Oaks Chamber Orchestra of Houston and A Far Cry of Boston, *Murmurations* explores the collective behavior observed in flocking formations of starlings and the similarities of visual and aural unity between performers. Discussing the themes of his work, Derek Bermel states, “When I listen to and watch a string orchestra play, I’m reminded of a flock of birds. Visually and aurally, the performers seek unity on many levels -- attention to tuning, tone, clarity of rhythm, consistency and pressure of bowing. They glide and dive in formation, soaring together or splitting into layers of counterpoint before regrouping into a single unit.” Also featured on the program is Stravinsky’s *Pulcinella* Suite arranged for string orchestra and Schubert’s String Quartet in D Minor, D. 810, *Death and the Maiden*, arranged for string orchestra by Mahler.



The program will be given on four evenings in different locations around the Bay Area: **Thursday, May 28** at 8 p.m., First Congregational Church, Berkeley, **Friday, May 29** at 8 p.m., First United Methodist Church, Palo Alto, **Saturday, May 30** at 8 p.m., SF Conservatory of Music, San Francisco and **Sunday, May 31** at 5 p.m., Osher Marin JCC, San Rafael. New Century offers an Open Rehearsal **Tuesday, May 27** at 10 a.m., Kanbar Performing Arts Center, San Francisco for a price of only \$8. The Open Rehearsal will offer a sneak preview of the concert repertoire, while allowing audiences to experience the musical democracy of a rehearsal without a conductor.

New Century Chamber Orchestra’s Featured Composer Residency Program, launched through the vision of Music Director Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg during her 2008-09 inaugural season, was established to give structure to the organization’s longstanding commitment to the creation and performance of new music. Each season, New Century works with a different composer, who creates at least one new work for the orchestra with Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg as concertmaster, soloist and muse. New Century also performs at least one existing piece by the Featured Composer to both represent a wider range of his or her work, and to help ensure the longevity of past compositions.

Described by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as a “brilliantly versatile composer,” 2014-2015 Featured Composer Derek Bermel has composed works that draw from a rich variety of musical genres, including classical, jazz, pop, rock, blues, folk, and gospel. He currently serves as Artist-in-Residence at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton and Artistic Director of the intrepid American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. He has received commissions from orchestras, ensembles, and soloists worldwide, and his many awards include the Rome Prize, Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships, and the Alpert Award in the Arts. In September 2014, Bermel joined New Century as a guest soloist for a program that featured three of his

chamber works: *A Short History of the Universe* for String Quartet and Clarinet; *Silvioudades*, a duet for clarinet and violin; and *Oct Up* for two string quartets and percussion. Joshua Kosman praised Bermel for his “characteristically skillful and imaginative” writing and commented specifically on the “sheer zesty fervor” of *A Short History of the Universe* with its “deep vein of wit and beauty.”

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Schubert and Stravinsky Masterpieces May 28-31, 2015

Open Rehearsal: May 27, 10 a.m., Kanbar Performing Arts Center, San Francisco

Thursday, May 28, 8 p.m., First Congregational Church, Berkeley
Friday, May 29, 8 p.m., First United Methodist Church, Palo Alto
Saturday, May 30, 8 p.m., San Francisco Conservatory
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Stravinsky: *Pulcinella Suite*

Derek Bermel: *Murmurations*

(Commissioned in Collaboration with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, River Oaks Chamber Orchestra of Houston and A Far Cry of Boston)

Schubert / Mahler: String Quartet in D Minor D. 810, *Death and the Maiden*

Single tickets range in price from \$29 to \$61 and can be purchased through City Box Office: www.cityboxoffice.com and (415) 392-4400. Discounted \$15 single tickets are available for patrons under 35.

Open Rehearsal tickets are \$8 general admission and can be purchased through City Box Office: www.cityboxoffice.com and (415) 392-4400.

ABOUT NEW CENTURY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The New Century Chamber Orchestra, one of only a handful of conductorless ensembles in the world, was founded in 1992 by cellist Miriam Perkoff and violist Wieslaw Pogorzelski. The 19-member string ensemble, including San Francisco Bay Area musicians and those who travel from across the U.S. and Europe to perform together, makes musical decisions collaboratively. World-renowned violin soloist, chamber musician and recording artist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg leads from the concertmaster chair. She joined the ensemble as music director and concertmaster in January 2008, bringing to New Century “a new sense of vitality and determination, as well as an audacious swagger that is an unmistakable fingerprint of its leader,” according to *Gramophone* magazine. This season marks her seventh with the orchestra and continues an illustrious line of concertmasters including Stuart Canin (1992-1999) and Krista Bennion Feeney (1999-2006).

In addition to performing classic pieces of chamber orchestra repertoire and commissioning new work, New Century breathes new life into rarely heard jewels of the past and performs world premieres. Salerno-Sonnenberg and New Century have made three successful national tours together. The 2011 performances in the Midwest, East Coast, and Southern California garnered record-breaking audiences and national critical acclaim. In January and February 2013, New Century followed with a highly successful eight-state national tour, the largest and most ambitious artistic undertaking in the organization’s history. In addition to touring efforts, New Century’s national footprint has also continued to grow with a rapidly increasing national radio presence.

The orchestra has released seven compact discs, the most recent its *From A to Z: 21st Century Concertos*. The orchestra’s first concert DVD, *On Our Way: Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and the New Century Chamber Orchestra*, released in May 2012, weaves together documentary footage and concert footage from a February 2011 performance at the Broad Stage in Santa Monica.

For more information on New Century, please visit <http://www.ncco.org>.

ABOUT NADJA SALERNO-SONNENBERG

One of the leading violinists of our time, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg is best known for her exhilarating performances, passionate interpretations, musical depth and unique charisma. A highly acclaimed soloist and recording artist, Nadja has also gained recognition in the orchestral arena. Nadja's first six seasons were hailed as a tremendous success by audiences and critics alike – “a marriage that works,” in her words, and renewing enthusiasm for “one of the most burnished and exciting ensembles in the Bay Area,” according to Rich Scheinin of the San Jose Mercury News.

A powerful and innovative presence on the recording scene, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg continues to enrich the collection of her record label NSS Music, which she stated in 2005. The label's roster of artists include pianist Anne-Marie McDermott, horn player John Cerminaro, pianist/composer Clarice Assad, Marin Alsop, the American String Quartet, the Colorado Symphony and Orquestra Sinfonica do Estado de Sao Paulo as well as the New Century Chamber Orchestra.

An American citizen, Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg was born in Rome and emigrated to the United States at the age of eight to study at The Curtis Institute of Music. After continuing on to study with Dorothy DeLay at The Juilliard School, Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg's professional career began in 1981 when she won the Walter W. Naumburg International Violin Competition. In 1983 she was recognized with an Avery Fisher Career Grant, and in 1988 was Ovarions Debut Recording Artist of the Year. In 1999 she was honored with the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize, awarded to instrumentalists who have demonstrated “outstanding achievement and excellence in music.” In May of that same year, Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg was awarded an honorary Master of Musical Arts from the New Mexico State University, the first honorary degree the University has ever awarded.

For more information on Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg, please visit:

www.nadjasalernosonnenberg.com

www.nssmusic.com

PHOTO CREDITS

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