



**NEW CENTURY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA PRESENTS WORLD PREMIERE COMMISSION
BY FEATURED COMPOSER JENNIFER HIGDON
MAY 5-8**



San Francisco, CA – April 7, 2016 – Music Director Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and New Century Chamber Orchestra conclude the 2015-2016 season **May 5-8** with the World Premiere of *Dance Card* by Pulitzer Prize-winner Jennifer Higdon. As this season's Featured Composer, Higdon was co-commissioned by New Century and River Oaks to write a new dance suite for string ensemble reflecting both their soloistic and ensemble virtuosity. Consisting of five separate movements that can stand alone as separate works, *Dance Card* is described by the composer as “a celebration of the joy, lyricism and passion of a group of strings playing together.” Following the theme of works inspired by dance, the evening also features Stravinsky's neo-Classical ballet *Apollon musagète*, a work based on Greek mythology and the composer's first composition for string orchestra. Completing the program is *Dance of the Seven Veils* from Strauss' *Salome* and Khachaturian's *Sabre Dance*.

The program will be given on four evenings in different locations around the Bay Area: **Thursday, May 5** at 8 p.m., First Congregational Church, Berkeley, **Friday, May 6** at 8 p.m., First United Methodist Church, Palo Alto, **Saturday, May 7** at 8 p.m., Herbst Theatre, San Francisco and **Sunday, May 8** at 5 p.m., Osher Marin JCC, San Rafael. New Century offers an Open Rehearsal **Tuesday, May 4** at 10 a.m., Kanbar Performing Arts Center, San Francisco for a price of only \$15. 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. Previous Featured Composers include Derek Bermel, Michael Daugherty, Lera Auerbach, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Mark O'Connor, William Bolcom and Clarice Assad.

A major figure in contemporary classical music, Jennifer Higdon won a 2010 Pulitzer Prize for her Violin Concerto that was described by the committee as a “deeply engaging piece that combines flowing lyricism with dazzling virtuosity.” Hailed by the *Washington Post* as “a savvy, sensitive composer with a keen ear, an innate sense of form and a generous dash of pure esprit,” the League of American Orchestras lists her as one of America's most frequently performed composers. She has received commissions from some of the world's most prestigious organizations including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Luzern Sinfonieorchester, Hague Philharmonic and Melbourne Symphony, as well as such groups as the Tokyo String Quartet and the President's Own Marine Band. She has also received numerous awards including the Serge Koussevitzky Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts and has served as Composer-in-Residence with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Pittsburgh, Green Bay Symphony as well as the

Tanglewood and Cabrillo music festivals.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

**Delight in Dancing
May 5-8, 2016**

Open Rehearsal: May 4, 10 a.m., Kanbar Performing Arts Center, San Francisco

Thursday, May 5, 8 p.m., First Congregational Church, Berkeley

Friday, May 6, 8 p.m., First United Methodist Church, Palo Alto

Saturday, May 7, 8 p.m., Herbst Theatre, San Francisco

Sunday, May 8, 5 p.m., Osher Marin JCC, San Rafael

Stravinsky: *Apollon musagète*

Jennifer Higdon: *Dance Card* (World Premiere Commission)

Strauss: *Dance of the Seven Veils* from *Salome*

Khachaturian: *Sabre Dance*

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 \$15 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. Her first six seasons with New Century 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 Ovation’s 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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