



**RAY CHEN DEBUTS AS GUEST CONCERTMASTER WITH
NEW CENTURY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
NOVEMBER 10-13**



San Francisco, CA – October 20, 2016 – New Century continues its 2016-2017 season **November 10-13** with debut performances by Australian/Taiwanese violinist Ray Chen. Marking only his third appearance in the Bay Area, Chen leads New Century as guest concertmaster and soloist in a program that features Mozart’s Divertimento in F major and Violin Concerto No. 3 in G major, alongside Elgar’s *Introduction and Allegro* and Britten’s Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge.

Winner of both the Queen Elisabeth (2009) and Yehudi Menuhin (2008) competitions, Ray Chen has appeared as soloist with some of the world’s leading orchestras including the London Philharmonic, National Symphony and the Orchestre National de France. In 2011, he made his Bay Area debut as soloist with the San Francisco Symphony and returned in 2014 to perform in recital at San Francisco Performances. Most recently, he made his debut appearance with the BBC Symphony at the BBC Proms in July 2016 with “sensational style” (*The Times*, UK) in a performance of Bruch’s Violin Concerto that was “rich, impossibly smooth and shimmering with passion” (*Express*, UK). Chen is the first classical musician to be invited to write a regular blog about his life as a touring soloist for the largest Italian publishing house, RCS Rizzoli. His online presence has generated a huge following of a younger generation of classical music fans through the use of multiple social media platforms, further strengthening his goal of expanding the reach of classical music to a much wider and more diverse audience.

“Ray Chen Leads” will be given on four evenings in different locations around the Bay Area: **Thursday, November 10** at 8 p.m., Berkeley City Club, **Friday, November 11** at 8 p.m., First United Methodist Church, Palo Alto, **Saturday, November 12** at 8 p.m., Herbst Theatre, San Francisco and **Sunday, November 13** at 5 p.m., Osher Marin JCC, San Rafael. New Century offers an Open Rehearsal **Wednesday, November 9** at 10 a.m., Zellerbach Rehearsal Hall “C”, 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.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Ray Chen Leads

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W. A. Mozart: Divertimento in F major, K. 138

Benjamin Britten: Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge for String Orchestra, op. 10

W. A. Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major

Edward Elgar: *Introduction and Allegro* for Strings, op. 47

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 RAY CHEN

Winner of the Queen Elisabeth and Yehudi Menuhin Competitions, Ray Chen is among the most compelling young violinists today. Ray has released three critically acclaimed albums on Sony including a recital program titled “Virtuoso” which was distinguished with the prestigious ECHO Klassik award. His latest release features an all-Mozart program recorded with Christoph Eschenbach and the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra.

Ray has appeared with some of the leading orchestras around the world including the London Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestre National de France where he joined Daniele Gatti for the televised Bastille Dayconcert in Paris to an audience of over 800,000. Other recent highlights include his 2016 debut at the BBC Proms where he appeared with the BBC Symphony at Royal Albert Hall in London.

Born in Taiwan and raised in Australia, Ray was accepted to the Curtis Institute of Music at age 15 where he studied with Aaron Rosand and was supported by Young Concert Artists. He plays the 1715 “Joachim” Stradivarius violin on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation. This instrument was once owned by the famed Hungarian violinist, Joseph Joachim (1831-1907).

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 ninth 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 works, 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, the 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>.