

New Century Chamber Orchestra

NADJA SALERNO-SONNENBERG, MUSIC DIRECTOR

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Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and New Century Chamber Orchestra open their 2014-15 season September 11-14 in four Bay Area concerts with Featured Composer and clarinetist Derek Bermel

Shchedrin's *Carmen Suite*, a signature work in New Century's repertoire, and Arvo Pärt's *Fratres* complete the program



(l to r: Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Derek Bermel, New Century Chamber Orchestra.
Photo credits: Kristin Hoeberrmann, Richard Bowditch, and Matthew Washburn).

San Francisco, August 12, 2014 – Music Director [Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg](#) and the [New Century Chamber Orchestra](#) open their seventh season together September 11-14, when acclaimed Featured Composer and clarinetist Derek Bermel joins them for four Bay Area concerts. The orchestra will perform three of Bermel's compositions, showcasing the Brooklyn composer's eclectic and globally-inspired musical language: *A Short History of the Universe* for String Quartet and Clarinet (inspired by his study of gravitational physics and string theory), *Oct Up* for two string quartets and percussion, and *Silvioudades*, with Salerno-Sonnenberg and Bermel as featured soloists on the work from his most recent CD, *Canzonas Americanas*, recorded with Alarm Will Sound.

The September concert program, which New Century will perform in Berkeley, Palo Alto, San Francisco, and San Rafael, also includes performances of Shchedrin's *Carmen Suite*, the Russian composer's strings-and-percussion orchestration drawn from Bizet's *Carmen*. A signature work in the orchestra's repertoire, the piece drew rave reviews and standing ovations in 2011, with Joshua Kosman of the *San Francisco Chronicle* praising New Century for a "superb performance, marked by rhythmic vivacity and emotional brilliance." Arvo Pärt's otherworldly and immensely popular *Fratres* completes the program. Existing in a variety of different instrumental incarnations, *Fratres* will be performed in its most recognized version for solo violin and string orchestra.

Concerts take place Thursday, September 11 at 8 pm at First Congregational Church in Berkeley; Friday, September 12 at 8 pm at First United Methodist Church in Palo Alto; Saturday, September 13 at the San

Francisco Conservatory of Music at 8 pm, and Sunday, September 14 at the Osher Marin Jewish Community Center in San Rafael at 5 pm.

New Century's collaboration with Derek Bermel is the most recent in the orchestra's ongoing Featured Composer Program. 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, both to offer a wider range of his or her work, and to help ensure the longevity of worthy compositions. Established under Salerno-Sonnenberg's leadership in 2008, the program has produced new works from some of the most significant American composers in contemporary music, including Clarice Assad, Lera Auerbach, William Bolcom, Michael Daugherty, Mark O'Connor, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, and now Bermel, who has just been appointed director of the American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall.

A West Coast premiere by Derek Bermel in May closes New Century's 2014-15 season. Bermel's newest work has been co-commissioned in collaboration with a national consortium of orchestras, including the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, River Oaks Chamber Orchestra of Houston, and A Far Cry of Boston. The consortium has been established as part of an effort to increase the national impact of the works commissioned by New Century, which they also do by touring and recording commissioned works. The orchestra's new CD, *From A to Z: 21st Century Concertos*, is a compilation of four of New Century's live world premiere performances of its newly commissioned works, with Salerno-Sonnenberg as soloist in music by Assad, Bolcom, Daugherty and Zwilich. It was released earlier this year on the NSS Music label.

Subscriptions and tickets for individual concerts for New Century Chamber Orchestra's 2014-15 season are on sale now. Single tickets for the September 11-14 concerts are \$29 to \$61 and can be purchased through City Box Office: www.cityboxoffice.com or (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.

Three-concert subscriptions range from \$78 to \$165; four-concert subscriptions range from \$104 to \$220. Call (415) 392-4400 or visit www.ncco.org to purchase.

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.

In seventeen concerts around the Bay Area in 2014-15, New Century performs a wide range of repertoire spanning four centuries, including Stravinsky's *Pulcinella Suite*, Mahler's transcription of the Schubert String Quartet D. 810 "Death and the Maiden," Brahms' Sextet for Strings in Bb Major, Mozart's Divertimento K. 136, and Arvo Pärt's *Fratres*. Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg takes the stage as soloist for Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* in a program that features a variety of holiday classics and a first-time collaboration with the San Francisco Girls Chorus. The orchestra also makes its first appearance at Sonoma State University's Weill Hall. Another major season highlight is a rare Bay Area appearance by retiring New York Philharmonic concertmaster Glenn Dicterow, invited by Salerno-Sonnenberg to lead the March set of concerts.

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

Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg is an internationally-acclaimed violin soloist and chamber musician best known for her exhilarating performances and passionate interpretations. The 2014-15 season with New Century is her seventh as Music Director with the string orchestra. 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, Salerno-Sonnenberg showcases the musicianship of talented artists through her recording label, NSS Music. Her label's projects including recordings by 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.

Nadja 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 1999, she was honored with the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize. Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg was born in Rome and immigrated to the United States at the age of eight to study at The Curtis Institute of Music. She later studied with Dorothy DeLay at The Juilliard School.

For more information, visit www.nadjasalernosonnenberg.com and <http://www.nssmusic.com>.

ABOUT DEREK BERMEL

Grammy-nominated composer and clarinetist Derek Bermel has been widely hailed for his creativity, theatricality, and virtuosity. Artistic Director of the American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Bermel is also Director of Copland House's emerging composers institute Cultivate, served as Composer-in-Residence at the Mannes College of Music, and enjoyed a four-year tenure as artist-in-residence at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton. Bermel has become recognized as a dynamic and unconventional curator of concert series that spotlight the composer as performer. Alongside his international studies of ethnomusicology and orchestration, an ongoing engagement with other musical cultures has become part of the fabric and force of his compositional language, in which the human voice and its myriad inflections play a primary role. He has received commissions from the Pittsburgh, National, Saint Louis, and Pacific Symphonies, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, WNYC Radio, La Jolla Music Society, Seattle Chamber Music Festival, eighth blackbird, Guarneri String Quartet, Music from Copland House and Music from China, De Ereprijs (Netherlands), violinist Midori, and electric guitarist Wiek Hijmans, among others.

The Boston Globe wrote, "There doesn't seem to be anything that Bermel can't do with the clarinet." His many honors include the Alpert Award in the Arts, Rome Prize, Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships, American Music Center's Trailblazer Award, and an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; commissions from the Koussevitzky and Fromm

Foundations, Meet the Composer, and Cary Trust; and residencies at Yaddo, Tanglewood, Aspen, Banff, Bellagio, Copland House, Sacatar, and Civitella Ranieri. His discography features three critically-acclaimed discs: an all-Bermel orchestral recording that includes the Grammy-nominated performance of his clarinet concerto *Voices*; *Soul Garden*, his small ensemble/solo music; and his most recent disc, *Canzonas Americanas*, with Alarm Will Sound. Bermel recently made his Cabrillo Festival debut, conducting his *Dust Dances*, and served as composer-in-residence at the Bowdoin Festival. In addition to his appearances as soloist with the New Century Chamber Orchestra, his recent and upcoming appearances and premieres include the *Intimacy of Creativity* Festival in Hong Kong; the Seattle Chamber Music Festival; *Hyllos*, his evening-length collaboration with The Veenfabriek and Asko | Schönberg Ensemble, which premiered in the Netherlands; and performances and recordings with the JACK quartet and Music from Copland House ensemble.

MEDIA CONTACT

For more information, to arrange interviews, for copies of New Century's latest CD, *From A to Z*, or for high-resolution photos, please email Jean Shirk at jean@shirkmedia.com, call 510-332-4195, or visit <http://ncco.org/about/14-15-press-news/>.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

New Century Chamber Orchestra

Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Music Director

Derek Bermel, clarinet

Carmen Returns

September 11-14, 2014

Open Rehearsal: Wednesday, September 10, 10 a.m., Kanbar Performing Arts Center, 44 Page St., San Francisco

Thursday, September 11, 8 pm, First Congregational Church, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley

Friday, September 12, 8 pm, First United Methodist Church, 625 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto

Saturday, September 13, 8 pm, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, 50 Oak St., San Francisco

Sunday, September 14, 5 pm, Osher Marin Jewish Community Center, 200 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael

Bizet/ Shchedrin: *Carmen Suite*

Arvo Pärt: *Fratres*

Derek Bermel: *A Short History of the Universe* for String Quartet and Clarinet

Derek Bermel, clarinet

Derek Bermel: *Oct Up* for Two String Quartets and Percussion

Derek Bermel: *Silvioudades*

Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, violin

Derek Bermel, clarinet