

 **New Century**
Chamber Orchestra
Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Music Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19, 2009

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MUSIC DIRECTOR NADJA SALERNO-SONNENBERG
AND NEW CENTURY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
ANNOUNCE 2009-10 SEASON



SAN FRANCISCO, CA (May 19, 2009) - Music Director **Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg** and the **New Century Chamber Orchestra** (New Century) will present a commissioned world premiere violin concerto from award-winning composer **William Bolcom** as part of the 2009-10 season, Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg's second as Music Director, New Century announced today.

Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg and the New Century Chamber Orchestra enjoyed an exceptionally successful first season together. Ticket sales increased 52% from the year previous, and subscription renewal rates jumped to 75%. Public enthusiasm for New Century has never been higher: since Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg became Music Director, contribution levels have been breaking records and New Century has twice been featured on American Public Media's "Performance Today."

Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg joined New Century in 2008 in the midst of a long and successful career as an in-demand soloist who performs with many of the world's finest orchestras, and is a sought-after recitalist. Her recordings and concerts feature a wide breadth of repertoire, from Baroque favorites to 20th century gypsy music. She has appeared on numerous national television

programs, and was the subject of the 1999 Academy Award-nominated documentary film, *Speaking in Strings*.

About the 2009-10 Season



The 2009-10 New Century Chamber Orchestra season begins with an evening of masterworks from Bach and Mussorgsky. These September concerts celebrate the launch of New Century's newest CD, which will be released this summer on Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg's label, NSS Music. The orchestra's season, its 18th, will include works by 2009-2010 Featured Composer **William Bolcom**, including his *Serenata Notturna* for Oboe and Strings, featuring soloist Laura Griffiths of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, three of the piano rags for which Mr. Bolcom is best known, arranged for strings, and *Romanza*, the violin concerto written for Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg and New Century.

In March 2009, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and the orchestra will present a diverse program that celebrates early 20th century nationalist composers. Featuring Bay Area tenor Brian Thorsett, and French hornist Kevin Rivard, the program will include Benjamin Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* alongside Dvořák's *Serenade for Strings* and Bartók's *Roumanian Dances*.

About the Featured Composer Program

The New Century Chamber Orchestra Featured Composer Program commissions composers to write new works, with Music Director Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg as concertmaster, soloist and muse. Nadja and the orchestra established this program to commission and perform new works and expand the chamber orchestra repertoire.

The second artist to be featured by the New Century Chamber Orchestra is National Medal of Arts, Pulitzer Prize, and Grammy Award-winner William Bolcom, one of the most versatile contemporary American composers of chamber, operatic, vocal, choral, cabaret, ragtime, and symphonic music. As a composer, Bolcom has written four violin sonatas; eight symphonies; three operas (*McTeague*, *A View from the Bridge* and *A Wedding*), several musical theater operas; eleven string quartets; and the Grammy Award-winning *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, based on the poetry of William Blake.



Bolcom describes Charles Ives as his greatest influence. In his operas and stage works, he chooses to set pieces about American characters by American authors and includes idioms such as ragtime and jazz. In addition to this wide stylistic diversity, his music often displays a trenchant sense of humor, on display in pieces such as the song "Lime Jello Marshmallow Cottage Cheese Surprise." He is also a noted performer, and has performed and recorded his own work frequently in collaboration with his wife and musical partner, mezzo-soprano Joan Morris.

Their primary specialties in both concerts and recordings are cabaret songs, show tunes, and popular songs from the early 20th century.

2009-2010 PROGRAMS:

Pictures at an Exhibition: New Traditions September 10-13, 2009

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Bach: Chaconne (from Partita No. 2 for Violin, BWV 1004)
Bach: Concerto for Violin in D minor (transcribed from BWV 1052)
Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, violin

Mussorgsky (arr. Assad): *Pictures at an Exhibition*

Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, world-famous violinist and Music Director, leads the New Century Chamber Orchestra into their second season together with a program that sheds new light on three jewels of the classical repertoire. Hear a thrilling new version of *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Mussorgsky's beloved masterpiece, which captures all the excitement and grandeur of the original. The evening begins with Nadja taking center stage to reinterpret some of Bach's most famous melodies.

Bolcom Meets Strauss November 19-22, 2009

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Bolcom: *Serenata Notturna* for Oboe & Strings
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Bolcom: *Three Rags* for String Quartet

Strauss: *Metamorphosen* for 23 solo strings

This program features music that is at once modern, elegant, and beautiful. 2009-2010 Featured Composer William Bolcom is one of American's most dynamic, prolific musical geniuses whose huge and varied oeuvre defies categorization. Bolcom is deeply rooted in the American tradition of rags and ragtime, but his voice includes a variety of influences from the rich traditions of the 20th century. Richard Strauss' heart-wrenching and elegiac *Metamorphosen*, a modern string

orchestra masterpiece, powerfully demonstrates music's ability to capture a moment in time – in this case, the bombing of the Munich opera house.

Serenades and Dances

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Kreisler (arr. Assad): *Praeludium and Allegro*

Dvořák : Serenade for Strings

Britten: Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings

Brian Thorsett, tenor

Kevin Rivard, horn

Bartók: *Roumanian Dances*

Our third concert program honors community and tradition. Dvořák, Britten, and Bartók are all strongly identified with the music of their native lands. We welcome rising young Bay Area stars Brian Thorsett and Kevin Rivard for the darkly poetic Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, op. 31. The evening opens with Nadja leading the orchestra in a fiery rendition of Kreisler's showpiece, *Praeludium and Allegro*, a favorite of audiences and musicians alike.

Sea to Shining Sea

May 6-9, 2010

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Barber: *Adagio* for Strings

Bolcom: *Romanza* violin concerto (**NCCO Commission, World Premiere**)

Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, violin

Copland: *Appalachian Spring* (original version)

Copland: *Hoe Down* from *Rodeo*

Celebrate the masters of American composition and the tradition that inspired them. Samuel Barber's beloved Adagio for Strings kicks off a program filled with the most cherished works in American music, including Aaron Copland's joyful *Appalachian Spring*. Nadja and New Century will present the world premiere of a new violin concerto by 2009-2010 Featured Composer William Bolcom, the undisputed modern master of American music.

Ticket Information

Season subscriptions for the orchestra's four sets of concerts in San Francisco, Berkeley, Palo Alto and San Rafael are on sale now through the NCCO at www.ncco.org and 415.357.1111, or through City Box Office after June 16 at www.cityboxoffice.com and 415.392.4400. Four-concert series subscriptions range from \$116 to \$188. A four-concert premiere box subscription, available exclusively at Herbst Theatre, including premium box seats, a visit with Music Director Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, and valet parking, is also available for \$400.

Single tickets for the orchestra's concerts go on sale to non-subscribers on July 1. Individual concert tickets are \$32 to \$54. Premiere box single tickets are available at Herbst Theatre for \$125. Patrons aged 30 and under can purchase subscriptions and single tickets for half-price.

About The New Century Chamber Orchestra

The New Century Chamber Orchestra, founded in 1992, looks for fresh, exciting ways to present classical music in the San Francisco Bay Area by combining performances of extraordinary quality with innovative programming. World-renowned violin soloist, chamber musician and recording artist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg joined the 17-member string ensemble as Music Director and Concertmaster in January 2008. The NCCO, comprised of local musicians as well as those who travel from across the U.S. and Europe to perform in the Bay Area together, performs without a conductor. Musical decisions are made collaboratively, resulting in an enhanced level of commitment on the part of the musicians to concerts of remarkable precision, passion and power.

As part of its dedication to the future of music and to the community, the NCCO provides violin lessons to underserved students in Marin City and San Rafael's Canal District. String quartets of NCCO members give intimate classroom performances in Bay Area elementary schools.

The orchestra has released four compact discs. *Written With The Heart's Blood*, a recording of Shostakovich works, was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1997. The orchestra has also recorded the music of 20th century Swiss composer Frank Martin, Argentine composers Alberto Williams and Alberto Ginastera, and Kurt Rohde. For more information, please visit www.ncco.org.

About Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg

Uniquely gifted and creative violin virtuoso Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg continues to bring joy to audiences whether from the stage, the TV screen, or the internet. Innovative, sharp and witty, she is truly an artist whose impact on the world of classical music is as deep as her love for the art.

An internationally-acclaimed soloist and chamber musician for more than 25 years, Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg was named Music Director and Concertmaster of the New Century Chamber Orchestra in January 2008. Nadja's debut with the orchestra was in September 2007, when

energy, excitement, and pure joy filled the air as the musicians excelled in a program of Bach, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky and Kreisler. The violinist's natural leadership, together with the ensemble's artistic excellence made for an evening to remember, thus opening the door for future collaboration. Her first season as Music Director, 2008-2009, was hailed as a tremendous success by audiences and critics alike – “a marriage that works,” in her words.

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 started in 2005. The label already features Ms. Salerno-Sonnenberg's *Merry* (a compilation of Christmas favorites, performed by Nadja and friends), *Nadja* (Tchaikovsky and Clarice Assad, violin concertos), *Live* (Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and Anne-Marie McDermott), as well as Ms. McDermott's *Bach*, and John Cerminaro's *John Cerminaro, A Life of Music*. Last year marked the release of NSS Music's first jazz album, entitled *Love, All That It Is*, featuring The Clarice Assad Trio. 2009 features the release in April of *Originis*, recorded by Nadja and the Assad brothers, Sergio and Odair, and in August of her first CD with the New Century Chamber Orchestra, featuring Astor Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*. An ever-evolving and creative project, NSS Music will continue to bring forth unique performances from many musical genres.

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 emigrated 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, please visit <http://www.nadjasalernosonnenberg.com/> or <http://www.nssmusic.com/>.

About William Bolcom

NCCO Featured Composer, 2009-10 Season

Composer/pianist William Bolcom, recipient of the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for Music, has received commissions from the Vienna Philharmonic (Salzburg Mozarteum), Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Saarlandischer Rundfunk, American Composers Orchestra, Saint Louis, National, Pacific, and Boston Symphonies, the MET Orchestra, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Mendelssohn Quartet, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, violinists Sergiu Luca and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne, soprano Benita Valente, the Van Cliburn Foundation, and many other performing arts organizations, ensembles, and artists.

As a piano soloist, accompanist for his wife (mezzo-soprano Joan Morris), and composer, Mr. Bolcom is represented on recordings by over 20 different labels. The Naxos recording of his *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, a musical illumination of 46 poems by William Blake, performed by University of Michigan orchestras and choruses with internationally-known soloists, under the baton of Maestro Leonard Slatkin, won four Grammys in February 2006, including Best Classical Album and Best Classical Contemporary Composition. Another Naxos album of his music, *William Bolcom Songs* with soprano Carole Farley and the composer at the piano, received two Grammy nominations; two others, Bolcom's *Fourth Symphony*, recorded by

Maestro Slatkin with the Saint Louis Symphony, and *After the Ball*, with Bolcom and Morris, have also received Grammy nominations. Over a period of 45 years poet/librettist Arnold Weinstein collaborated with Bolcom on his operas, cabaret songs, and choral works; he died September 2005.

Recipient of fellowships and grants from numerous major foundations, Mr. Bolcom was admitted to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1993, and holds honorary doctorates from the San Francisco Conservatory, Albion College, New England Conservatory, New School University in New York, and Baldwin Wallace College. As a writer, he has been published in numerous music magazines, collaborated with Robert Kimball on a book about Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake [recently reissued], and in articles in the New Grove Dictionary of Music. His edition of essays by composer George Rochberg, *The Aesthetics of Survival*, published by the University of Michigan Press, was reissued in a revised edition in 2004.

Born in Seattle, Washington in 1938, William Bolcom entered the University of Washington to study composition privately with John Verrall at the age of eleven. Later he studied extensively with Darius Milhaud in California and in Paris. He received a master's degree from Mills College and was the first conferee of a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Stanford University. Bolcom taught at the University of Washington, Queens and Brooklyn Colleges of the City University of New York, and New York University's Tisch School of the Arts before joining the University of Michigan faculty in 1973. He retired in 2008 and continues to reside in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Featured Guest Artists

Laura Griffiths, oboe

Laura Griffiths is Principal Oboe of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, Acting Principal Oboe of the San Francisco Opera, and was Principal Oboe of the Cleveland Orchestra. She has served as Acting Associate Principal Oboe of the San Francisco Symphony, Principal Oboe of the Rochester Philharmonic, and has been guest Principal Oboe with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Boston Symphony, Saint Louis Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, and St. Paul Chamber Orchestras.

During the summer, Ms. Griffiths is Principal Oboe of The Midsummer Mozart Festival Orchestra, under the direction of George Cleve. She was Principal Oboe of the Britt Festival Orchestra from 1995-2000 and was Principal Oboe of the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego for eleven years.

From 1995 to 2002 Ms. Griffiths taught chamber music at the Eastman School of Music. She was also an interim faculty member at the Oberlin School of Music in 2005 and has taught master classes at the Eastman School of Music, the Yale School of Music, the San Francisco Conservatory, and several others.

Laura Griffiths received a Bachelor of Music and Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music, where she was a student of Richard Killmer. She recently recorded a solo CD to be released on Boston Records.

Brian Thorsett, tenor

During 2009-10, tenor Brian Thorsett performs the roles of Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Fernand in *La Favorite*, Oronte in *Alcina*, Jupiter in *Semele*, Poe in *Usher House*, the title roles in Gounod's *Faust* and *Romeo et Juliet*, as well as Mercury, Spirit and the sailor in *Dido and Aeneas* under the baton of Nicholas McGegan.

Concert engagements include Evangelist in both Bach's *St. John* and *St. Matthew Passion*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, the *Lord Nelson* and *Theresa Masses*, as well as *The Creation*, of Haydn, Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* and Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*. In the summer of 2009 he will study and perform the *St. Matthew Passion* with Masaaki Suzuki (Bach Collegium Japan) at the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme at the Aldeburgh Festival in England.

An avid recitalist, Brian will sing a series of recitals in Half Moon Bay, San Francisco and England featuring the music of Monteverdi, Schubert, Britten, Surinach and Ginastera. He is a graduate of San Francisco Opera's Merola Program, Glimmerglass Opera's Young American Artist program and the Music Academy of the West, and has appeared across the United States in over 60 operatic roles and 80 concert works.

Kevin Rivard, horn

Kevin Rivard began studying the horn at the age of 11 in his hometown of St. Petersburg, Florida and is rapidly establishing himself as a soloist, orchestral performer and chamber musician. While studying with Carolyn Wahl, a member of The Florida Orchestra, Mr. Rivard began to win top-tier competitions and soon received a full scholarship to attend The Juilliard School.

While at Juilliard, he studied with Julie Landsman, Principal Horn of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and during his sophomore year he won the position of Assistant Principal Horn with The Florida Orchestra. In 2005, Mr. Rivard returned to The Juilliard School to finish his performance degree and to make freelance appearances with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra and *Les Misérables* on Broadway.

Mr. Rivard's numerous awards and competition wins include the Grand Prize and Audience Choice award at the 2008 Concours International d'Interprétation Musicale in Paris, France, the Grand Prize at the 2007 International Horn Competition of America, winner of the Juilliard Concerto Competition, and Presidential Scholar in the Arts. Mr. Rivard, after winning second place in the Ima Hogg Young Artists Solo Competition, made his solo debut with the Houston Symphony in 2007, where he performed the Gliere Concerto.

Mr. Rivard has participated in the Sarasota Music Festival, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, and the Verbier Festival, and was previously a member of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra and the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra. He is currently the Co-Principal Horn of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Principal Horn of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra. He resides in Lafayette, California with his wife, Elizabeth, and their one year old son, Andre.

More Information

For more press information, or to request an interview with Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, William Bolcom, and New Century guest artists, please contact Maura Lafferty, Marketing and Public Relations Coordinator, at 415.357.1111, ext. 308, or mlafferty@ncco.org, or Rachel Rossos, Director of Development and Marketing, at 415.357.1111, ext. 305, or rrossos@ncco.org. High-resolution photos are available at www.ncco.org/mediakit.htm.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

PROGRAMS:

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