



# **SFCM New Music Ensemble**

**Nicole Paiement,**  
*conductor*

Friday, October 7th, 2022 at 7:30 PM  
Barbro Osher Recital Hall

# Program

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## *X Morceaux Mystérieux*

Rongrong Chen

I. L'absence de...

(b. 1998)

II.

III. La dissimulation

IV. Homage à Messiaen

V. *Ceci n'est pas un morceau de musique.*

VI. Les différents degrés de lumière

## *3^(1+1) – Tsunami*

Kenji Oh

(b. 1981)

## **- Brief Pause -**

## *Songes d'une nuit d'hiver*

Jacques Desjardins

(b. 1962)

## *Sinfonietta for Eleven Instruments*

David Conte

I. Overture

(b. 1955)

II. Elegy

III. Finale

# SFCM New Music Ensemble

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## **Flute**

Jessie Nucho\*

## **Oboe**

Nicholas Karr

## **Clarinet**

Harry Hwang

## **Bassoon**

Fabio Valery Villanova

## **Horn**

Kyle Ko\*

## **Trumpet**

Conrad Smith

## **Violin**

Annemarie Schubert

Yiran Yao

## **Viola**

Li-Jen Wang

## **Cello**

Eric Yang

## **Bass**

William Chang

\*indicates guest artist

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# Artist Profiles

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**Nicole Paiement** has gained an international reputation as a conductor of contemporary music and opera. Her numerous recordings include many world premiere works.

Maestro Paiement's 2012 Dallas Opera debut conducting Peter Maxwell Davies' 1979 thriller, *The Lighthouse* earned rave reviews. Subsequently, Paiement was appointed Principal Guest Conductor at The Dallas Opera. Paiement has since returned to Dallas to conduct performances of Tod Machover's *Death and the Powers*, as well as the critically acclaimed and highly anticipated world premiere of Joby Talbot's opera *Everest*, Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* and Douglas Cuomo's *Arjuna's Dilemma*. In 2018, Paiement conducted the US premiere of Michel Van Der Aa's *Sunken Garden*.

Founder and Artistic Director of San Francisco's Opera Parallèle, Paiement has conducted many new productions, including: world premieres of Lou Harrison's final version of *Young Caesar*, Dante De Silva's commissioned opera *Gesualdo, Prince of Madness* (presented as a graphic opera), Luciano Chessa's commissioned opera *A Heavenly Act*, the commissioned chamber version of John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*, the premiere of the re-orchestration of Terence Blanchard's *Champion* in collaboration with SFJAZZ Center; West Coast premieres of John Rea's re-orchestration of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* and Philip Glass' *Orphée*; Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts*; Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar*; Francis Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*; Kurt Weill's *Mahagonny Songspiel*; American Premieres of Adam Gorb's *Anyá 17* and Tarik O'Regan's *Heart of Darkness*; the San Francisco Bay Area return of Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*; a new production of Peter Maxwell Davies' *The Lighthouse*; Philip Glass' *Les Enfants Terribles*; and Jonathan Dove's *Flight*. In 2017/18 Paiement conducted a new double bill of Jake Heggie's *At the Statue of Venus* and Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* in collaboration with SFJAZZ, as well as Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*. Opera Parallèle made its debut at Phillip Glass' Days & Nights Festival in the 2018/19 season with Glass' *In the Penal Colony*. That season also featured Paiement conducting the world premiere performances of *Today it Rains*, a commissioned opera by Laura Kaminsky based on the life of Georgia O'Keeffe, and the return of Rachel Portman's *The Little Prince*. Most recently with OP, Paiement was conductor for the company's groundbreaking film project, *Everest – A Graphic Novel Opera*.

# Artist Profiles

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Ms. Paiement is a very active guest conductor. In 2019, she made her debut at Lyric Opera of Chicago with Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, as well as performances with the Washington National Opera, The Glimmerglass Festival (2016 – 2018) and a debut at Seattle Opera with Mason Bates' *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*. Other prior engagements include Talbot's *Everest* with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Puts' *Silent Night* at The Atlanta Opera and Washington National Opera for the world premiere of Mohammed Fairouz's *The Dictator's Wife*. In 2019 Paiement also conducted the world premiere of Jake Heggie's *If I Were You* with Merola Opera Program, San Francisco.

Mo. Paiement made her debut at L'Opéra de Montréal with the Canadian premiere of Benjamin's *Written on Skin* in January 2020 and with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in November 2020. Upcoming engagements include her UK premiere in June 2023 conducting Talbot's *Everest* with the BBC Symphony at the Barbican Center, London. Mo. Paiement will also return to the Dallas Opera in April 2022 to conduct Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers* and to L'Opéra de Montréal in Season 22/23.

Paiement has served as the Artistic Director of the BluePrint Project at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM) where she has commissioned, premiered, and recorded works from many living American composers. At SFCM, she holds the Jean and Josette Deleage Distinguished Chair in New Music. Paiement previously served as the Director of Ensembles at the University of California – Santa Cruz (UCSC), where she was awarded the UCSC Eminent Professor Award in 2014. She received the Edward A. Dickson Emeritus Professorship in 2015 in recognition of her outstanding contributions and achievement in artistic scholarship and teaching.

Paiement was awarded American Composer's Forum's "Champion of New Music Award" for her outstanding contributions to contemporary music in 2016. In addition to being a leader in the world of contemporary opera, Ms. Paiement is also a specialist in early 20th Century French music and regularly conducts music from the Baroque and Classical repertoire.

# Selected Program Notes

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Rongrong Chen

Born: 1998

## ***X morceaux mystérieux (2021)***

X morceaux mystérieux is a set of pieces inspired by the “René Magritte - The Fifth Season” exhibition at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. This set of pieces is the composer’s understanding of the mysterious and surreal beauty in Magritte’s paintings.

The 1st movement “L’absence de...” represents the absence of the main subject in Magritte’s painting, “Lightning”, by creating a subtly tense musical atmosphere, and then having the 2nd movement completely silent.

The theme of the 3rd movement, “La dissimulation”, is “concealment”. Magritte drew standing and sitting coffins in his painting, “The Balcony”, concealing what is inside; the composer hid the melodic fragments in different instrumental lines, concealing the melody.

The 4th movement is an homage to Messiaen’s “Quartet for the End of Time”. This movement took inspiration from a beautiful and serene painting, “The Kiss”, which depicts a giant bird of the bright blue sky flying in the night sky above the ocean.

The title of the 5th movement is “Ceci n’est pas un morceau de musique.” which means “This is not a piece of music.” This movement is what the composer calls “obvious music”. It is a musical interpretation of Magritte’s “The Treachery of Images”, also known as “This is not a pipe”.

The 6th movement, “Les différents degrés de lumière”, emphasizes the collision of different musical layers. The sound of this movement is slightly disturbing, but at the same time strangely complete. It is the composer’s interpretation of the painting “Empire of Light”.

*- Program note from the composer*

# Selected Program Notes

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*Jacques Desjardins*

*Born: 1962*

## ***Songes d'une nuit d'hiver (2016)***

*Songes d'une nuit d'hiver* nostalgically alludes to the folk songs of my childhood, growing up in the snow of Québec. I remember visiting my maternal grandparents on Sunday afternoons, where countless aunts, uncles, and cousins would sing folk songs rooted in the oral tradition of old France, with lyrics about places on the old continent none of them had ever been to, while my grandfather was playing his fiddle held the medieval way rested on his shoulder rather than on his neck.... The piece is therefore a personal homage to this wintry past of mine, weaving some of these songs in a polytonal and polymetric tapestry, as if emerging out of a dream, from the perspective of an uprooted Québécois boy, now established in the land of the free, that of Uncle Sam, the home of the brave.... Hence, the piece also reflects on my status as an expat in the United States, now a newly sworn in citizen of this oh, so complex country....

*- Program note from the composer*

*David Conte*

*Born: 1955*

## ***Sinfonietta for Eleven Instruments (2015)***

*Sinfonietta for Eleven Instruments* is a transcription of my *Sinfonietta* which was commissioned by the Atlantic Classical Orchestra, Stewart Robertson, conductor, in 2012. This version was created especially for my 60th birthday concert and premiered on November 1, 2015, at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, conducted by Michael Morgan.

As a composer I have specialized in vocal music, choral music and opera, but in recent years I have been turning my attention to instrumental music. Since 2009 I have composed a string quartet, a piano trio, a sextet for clarinet, string quartet, and piano, and a suite for organ and brass



# Selected Program Notes

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quintet. Long study of the works of the composers I most admire has taught me that instrumental music is informed by a vocal impulse. Thus, I have striven to imbue this work with both dramatic and lyrical melodies.

A “Sinfonietta” is a work with the character of a symphony of less than standard length and often for smaller forces. Whereas many concertgoers nowadays think of symphonies as having the proportions and scope of those by composers like Tchaikovsky, Mahler, and Shostakovich, my Sinfonietta resembles more in spirit works like Prokofiev’s Classical Symphony, Stravinsky’s Symphony in C, or Copland’s Short Symphony. Composed between June and October of 2012, the original version of the Sinfonietta is scored for a standard classical orchestra of woodwinds in pairs, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings. I have reduced the piece here for wind quartet, horn, trumpet, and string quintet. The work lasts fourteen minutes and is cast in three movements played without pause.

The first movement, Overture, is a spirited sonata-allegro, quite classical in form and mood, with dotted rhythms reminiscent of a French overture and containing animated running-sixteenth notes. The accumulation of rhythmic energy in this movement suddenly comes to a halt, as solos in the oboes, clarinets, and bassoon form a transition which leads to the second movement, Elegy. This movement is characterized by a quiet intensity, with a “sighing” motive in the strings, answered by more florid passages in the solo woodwinds. These two ideas are gradually and subtly developed and transformed while moving through many tonalities and arriving at several climaxes. The movement ends with rising woodwind solos. The third movement, Finale, begins with animated figuration arising from the low register of the ensemble, culminating in the announcement of a jaunty, syncopated theme proclaimed by all players. The development of this theme leads to an animated climax that subsides into a second lyrical theme, which is broadly sung by the solo violin. More development follows, succeeded by a long transition built on a steady ostinato. At this point all the various themes heard throughout the movement are combined in counterpoint, building to an energetic coda.

*- Program note from the composer*

# Upcoming Concerts at SFCM

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**Chamber Music Tuesday**  
**October 11, 2022 at 7:30 pm**  
**Barbro Osher Recital Hall**  
Robert McDonald, *piano*

**SFCM Orchestra**  
**October 22, 2022 at 7:30 pm**  
**Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall**  
Edwin Outwater, *conductor*

**SFCM Baroque Ensemble**  
**October 30, 2022 at 7:30 pm**  
**Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall**  
Corey Jamason and Elisabeth Reed, *directors*  
Pauline Kempf '22, *baroque violin*

For more information, please visit  
**[www.sfcm.edu/performance-calendar](http://www.sfcm.edu/performance-calendar)**

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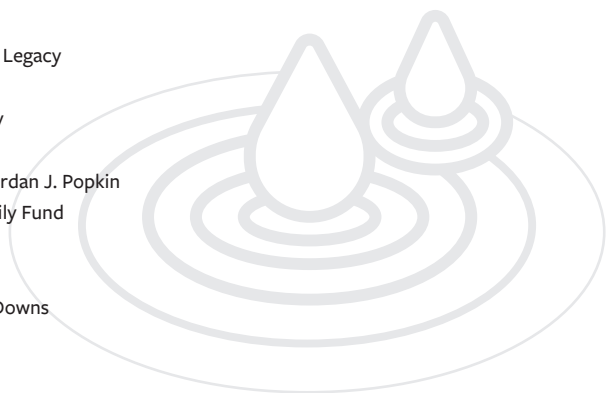
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Jan Frances Maakestad  
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Brad Jennifer Colleen and Claire McCullough  
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Named after one of our founders, the Ada Clement Legacy Society honors individuals who care so deeply about the future of music that they have generously made provisions for SFCM in their will, trust, or other legacy plans. With profound gratitude, we recognize all Ada Clement Legacy Society members as of August 18, 2022.

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