

Contact:  
Public Relations  
San Francisco Symphony  
(415) 503-5474  
[publicrelations@sfsymphony.org](mailto:publicrelations@sfsymphony.org)  
[sfsymphony.org/press](https://sfsymphony.org/press)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / AUGUST 13, 2020**



**SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AND SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY  
ANNOUNCE THE EMERGING BLACK COMPOSERS PROJECT**

**Ten composers to receive \$15,000 commission, workshops and performances by the San Francisco Symphony or San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and mentorship from trio of Bay Area music directors: Michael Morgan, Edwin Outwater, and Esa-Pekka Salonen**

**First call for applications open now through December 31, 2020**

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**—The San Francisco Symphony and the San Francisco Conservatory (SFCM) partner to announce The Emerging Black Composers Project, a new initiative to commission ten new works over the next ten years. Developed in partnership with SFCM’s President’s Advisory Council on Equity and Inclusion, with artistic guidance from Oakland Symphony Music Director Michael Morgan, SFCM Music Director Edwin Outwater, and SF Symphony Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen, this initiative will foster the creation, workshop, and performance of new music from early-career Black American composers.

The first call for applications opens today and runs through December 31, 2020, with the world premiere performance of the first commission planned for the 2021–22 season. All applications will go through an anonymous review process, emulating blind auditions, so that gender, age, and other identifying data are concealed to eliminate unintentional bias. The review panel comprises composer and pianist Anthony Davis; singer and SFCM Roots, Jazz, and American Music faculty Carmen Bradford; conductor and Music Director of the Berkeley Symphony Joseph Young; composer Germaine Franco; composer and SFCM Faculty Elinor Armer; and composer and conductor John Adams along with Morgan, Outwater, and Salonen. The first commission will be announced in Spring 2021.

“San Francisco Conservatory of Music is embarking on a series of ambitious projects designed to elevate Black voices and expand the American canon,” said SFCM President David H. Stull. “When Black talent is nurtured, we strengthen our culture of excellence, and we look forward to deepening the impact of The Emerging Black Composers Project through this partnership with the San Francisco Symphony.”

“The San Francisco Symphony is pleased to partner with our colleagues at the San Francisco Conservatory to maximize the value these commissions will bring to early-career Black American composers,” said San Francisco Symphony CEO Mark C. Hanson. “The SF Symphony acknowledges that our industry has a long history of excluding Black artists due to systemic racism, and that the work of Black composers often does not receive the exposure or prominence it deserves. We believe The Emerging Black Composers Project is a small step towards reducing some of the barriers these talented artists unjustly face in our field, and we look forward to performing and promoting these new works in future SF Symphony seasons.”

Each of the ten composers selected will receive a commissioning fee of \$15,000 and artistic mentorship from Morgan, Outwater, and Salonen. Through workshops at the Conservatory, composers will hear, record, and revise their work over the course of several months before it receives its world premiere by either the San Francisco Symphony or the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In addition to the commissioning fee, all associated recording fees, copyist fees, and travel expenses will be covered by the Conservatory. The Emerging Black Composers Project is made possible by Laurence and Michèle Corash, who pledged \$250,000 to support this initiative.

### **How to Apply**

All Black American composers (U.S. citizens or permanent residents) who have completed a degree program in composition or music performance, or have equivalent experience, are encouraged to apply. Applicants must submit a resume along with three scores and recordings of past or current compositions reflective of their work. The deadline for the first round of applications is December 31, 2020. For further information and to apply, visit [sfc.edu/EBCApplication](https://sfc.edu/EBCApplication).

### **About the San Francisco Symphony**

Founded in 1911, the San Francisco Symphony is widely considered to be among the most artistically adventurous and innovative arts institutions in the U.S., celebrated for its artistic excellence, creative performance concepts, active touring, award-winning recordings, and standard-setting education programs. In the 2020–21 season, the San Francisco Symphony welcomes composer and conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen as its twelfth Music Director and embarks on a new vision for the present and future of the orchestral landscape. In their inaugural season together, Esa-Pekka Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony introduce a groundbreaking artistic leadership model anchored by eight Collaborative Partners from a variety of cultural disciplines: Nicholas Britell, Julia Bullock, Claire Chase, Bryce Dessner, Pekka Kuusisto, Nico Muhly, Carol Reiley, and Esperanza Spalding. This group of visionary artists, thinkers, and doers join with Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony to embark on a future of experimentation by collaborating on new ideas, breaking conventional rules, and creating unique and powerful experiences. Following his remarkable 25-year tenure as the San Francisco Symphony’s Music Director from 1995–2020, Michael Tilson Thomas has been appointed the Orchestra’s first Music Director Laureate. For more information, visit [sfsymphony.org](https://sfsymphony.org).

### **About the San Francisco Conservatory of Music**

Founded in 1917, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM) is a global destination for musical excellence, earning an international reputation for producing musicians of the highest caliber. Located in the heart of San Francisco's Civic Center, SFCM's faculty includes nearly 30 members of the San Francisco Symphony as well as Grammy Award-winning artists in fields ranging from orchestral and chamber performance to classical guitar. The Conservatory offers its 400-plus collegiate students fully accredited bachelor's and master's degrees and professional diplomas in composition and instrumental and vocal performance, as well as in newly established, groundbreaking tracks such as Technology and Applied Composition and Roots, Jazz, and American Music. SFCM's collaborations with major Bay Area arts

presenters, including the San Francisco Symphony, Opera, Ballet, and SFJAZZ Center, present an unprecedented learning environment for Conservatory students to engage with the world's leading artists. The Conservatory's relationships with Sony Playstation, Skywalker Sound, and other Silicon Valley companies also offer unique opportunities that reinforce the institution's innovative curricular approach in artistic, intellectual, professional, and individual development, a connected learning sequence that gives students an education for life. SFCM's collegiate and Pre-College students have appeared at such storied venues as Carnegie Hall and Davies Symphony Hall and have performed on national radio programs including NPR's Live from Here and Performance Today. Notable alumni include violinists Yehudi Menuhin and Isaac Stern, conductor and pianist Jeffrey Kahane, soprano Elza van den Heever, the Naumburg Award-winning Telegraph Quartet (on faculty as SFCM's Quartet-in-Residence), Blue Bottle Coffee founder James Freeman, and Ronald Losby (President of Steinway & Sons - Americas), among others. In October 2018, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music broke ground on the Ute and William K. Bowes, Jr. Center for Performing Arts (the Bowes Center), a building that will transform San Francisco's arts district with an unparalleled space for students and the community to create, share, and engage with music. Opening in fall 2020, the Bowes Center will more than double the size of SFCM's facilities and dramatically expand the school's campus in the heart of San Francisco's Civic Center. For more information, visit [sfc.edu](http://sfc.edu).

---

Connect with the San Francisco Symphony on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), and [Soundcloud](#):



*The San Francisco Symphony receives support from more than 8,500 individual donors and 250 partner institutions.*

*Chevron is the inaugural Second Century Partner of the San Francisco Symphony*

*Emirates is the Official Airline of the San Francisco Symphony*

*Franklin Templeton and Fiduciary Trust International are Season Partners of the San Francisco Symphony*

*The San Francisco Symphony's Official Radio Partner is KDFC, The Bay Area's Radio Home for Classical Music and the Arts*

*San Francisco Chronicle is the Official Media Partner of the San Francisco Symphony*

- SFS -