

aleba gartner associates
134 henry street • new york, ny 10002
tel: 212/206-1450 • e-mail: a@alebagartner.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tickets & Info: 212/854-7799; www.millertheatre.com

Press Contacts:

Aleba Gartner, 212/206-1450; a@alebagartner.com

Charlotte Landrum, 212/854-2380; c12867@columbia.edu

“...the series which stands out as exceptionally fine from all others is the *Composer Portraits* concerts presented by Miller Theatre.” —Composer and critic George Grella, *The Big City* blog

MILLER THEATRE AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

offers two world premiere commissions as it continues its *Composer Portraits* series:

Benet Casablancas

Thursday, February 25, 8:00PM

Miller introduces the shimmering harmony and whimsical spirit of the Catalan composer

Sebastian Currier

Friday, March 5, 8:00PM

Alongside a new work, Christopher Taylor gives an encore performance of Currier's brilliant piano concerto

Tickets: \$25 • Students: \$15

In the words of Melissa Smey, Miller's "ambitious" (*The New York Times*) new director:

“One of Miller Theatre's most important roles is as a supporter of new work. I am delighted to present two new Miller commissions, performed by two of our favorite ensembles. In February, the Perspectives Ensemble will bring to life composer Benet Casablancas's Rothko-inspired *Four Darks in Red* and in March the Argento Chamber Ensemble will premiere *Body Music* by Sebastian Currier.”

Composer Portraits

BENET CASABLANCAS (b. 1956)

Thursday, February 25, 8:00PM

Onstage discussion with Benet Casablancas

Catalan composer **Benet Casablancas** seeks personal and aesthetic independence in his work. Marked by a rhythmic spirit, his music moves with shimmering harmonic language often at a whimsical register. This Portrait includes his acclaimed *Seven Scenes from Hamlet*, for narrator and ensemble, along with a world premiere Miller Theatre commission, *Four Darks in Red*, inspired by Mark Rothko's painting of the same name, a part of the collection of New York's own Whitney Museum.

PROGRAM: New Epigrams (1997)

Little Night Music (1992) (*U.S. premiere*)

Four Darks in Red (2010) (*World premiere, Miller Theatre commission*)

Seven Scenes from Hamlet (1988-1989) (*U.S. premiere*)

ARTISTS: **Perspectives Ensemble**
Sato Moughalian, artistic director
Angel Gil-Ordóñez, conductor

BIOS: **BENET CASABLANCAS** is one of the leading Catalan composers of his generation. He studied in Barcelona and Vienna, has a Ph.D. in musicology, and took courses with György Ligeti, Elliott Carter, and George Benjamin. His numerous awards include the Spanish National Recording Prize, Composer's Arena of Amsterdam, and Finalist of the Prix de Composition Prince Pierre de Monaco. His music has been performed worldwide by soloists and ensembles such as the London Sinfonietta, Ensemble

Contemporain de Montréal, and BBC Symphony Orchestra. His wide-ranging oeuvre, covering the most diverse genres and formats, is marked by a quest for radical personal and aesthetic independence.

PERSPECTIVES ENSEMBLE has presented thematic concerts as well as programs on subjects that bridge the visual, musical, and literary arts. The group collaborates with some of the most dynamic and visionary conductors today, including Angel Gil-Ordóñez, Rob Kapilow, Roger Nierenberg, Francisco Nuñez, and George Steel, in concerts and recordings that feature the works of living composers and historic figures, shedding new light on their work through explorations of their music in the context of their time and place. Over the last decade, the Ensemble has explored both Spanish and Catalan music and has collaborated with IberArtists in programs of music of the Modernist movement in Spain; and for world premieres of music by Vadillo, Artero, Sotelo, and Erkoreka.

SATO MOUGHALIAN's activities as an artistic director includes the founding of Perspectives Ensemble in 1993; the creation of touring chamber groups for Columbia Artists over a period of seven years; artistic direction of Rutgers University's SummerFest and Music on the Island; critically acclaimed recordings for Sony Classics, Newport Classics, and New World Records; and collaborations with conductors, composers, musicians, and artists in other media. As founder of MAYA, she is active in seeking and identifying emerging composers and working with them through the commissioning process. Perspectives Ensemble was created, in part, to present works within a cultural context and to create performances that are informed by the influences prevailing on composers at the time of composition.

ANGEL GIL-ORDÓÑEZ has attained an outstanding reputation among Spain's new generation of conductors as he carries on the tradition of his teacher and mentor, Sergiu Celibidache. The former associate conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Spain, Gil-Ordóñez has conducted symphonic music, opera, and ballet throughout Europe, the United States, and Latin America. In the United States, he has appeared with the American Composers Orchestra, Opera Colorado, the Pacific Symphony, the Hartford Symphony, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and the National Gallery Orchestra in Washington, D.C. In 2006, the King of Spain awarded Gil-Ordóñez with the country's highest civilian decoration, the Royal Order of Queen Isabella, which is equivalent to a knighthood.

“Little Night Music”: A Composer’s Salon with Benet Casablanca

Wednesday, February 24, at 7:00PM

New York University, Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò (24 West 12th Street)

On the night before the Benet Casablanca *Composer Portrait*, The Catalan Center at New York University will host “Little Night Music”: A Composer’s Salon with composer Benet Casablanca; CUNY musicologist Antoni Pizà; flutist and artistic director of Perspectives Ensemble Sato Moughalian; and Melissa Smey, director of Miller Theatre. The salon will feature a performance of Casablanca’s *Petita Música Nocturna* by the Perspectives Ensemble, and a conversation among all the participants in which Casablanca’s musical oeuvre will be discussed in the context of the European and North American modernist traditions.

FREE; no tickets required. For more info, call 212-998-8255 or email mll53@nyu.edu.

Composer Portraits

SEBASTIAN CURRIER (b. 1959)

Friday, March 5, 8:00PM

Onstage discussion with Sebastian Currier and John Schaefer, host of WNYC’s Soundcheck

Grawemeyer-award winning composer **Sebastian Currier** creates music that is “lyrical, colorful, firmly rooted in tradition, but absolutely new,” says *The Washington Post*. His ability to evoke an array of emotions and instrumental colors are his stylistic trademarks. This Portrait includes a world premiere Miller Theatre commission, along with an encore performance of a 2006 Miller “Pocket Concerto” commission played by the brilliant pianist **Christopher Taylor**.

PROGRAM: Night Time (1998)

Body Music (2009) (*world premiere, Miller Theatre commission*)

Piano Concerto (2006) (*Miller Theatre commission*)

ARTISTS: **Christopher Taylor, piano**
Argento Chamber Ensemble
Michel Galante, conductor

BIOS: **SEBASTIAN CURRIER** is the 2007 recipient of the prestigious Grawemeyer Award. His music has been performed at major venues worldwide by acclaimed artists and orchestras. He has written works that involve electronic media and video. *Nightmaze*, a multimedia piece based on a text of Thomas Bolt where strange road signs loom up only to disappear into the night, has been performed by Network for New Music and the Mosaic Ensemble. Currier has received many prestigious awards including the Berlin Prize, Rome Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, and an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR is known for a passionate advocacy of music written in the past 100 years but his repertoire spans four centuries. In recent seasons Taylor has concertized around the globe, performing throughout Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean. At home in the United States he has appeared with such orchestras as the New York Philharmonic and Los Angeles Philharmonic. As a soloist he has performed in New York's Carnegie and Alice Tully Halls and Washington's Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, as well as the Ravinia and Aspen festivals. He was named an American Pianists' Association Fellow for 2000, before which he received an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 1996 and the Bronze Medal in the 1993 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

ARGENTO CHAMBER ENSEMBLE is the performance arm of the Argento New Music Project. The ensemble has toured widely in the United States and abroad in festivals including the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, the International Festival of Spectral Music in Turkey, the American Festival of Microtonal Music in New York, and the International Festival of Electro-acoustic music. The group has worked with leading composers such as Pierre Boulez, Tania Leon, Tristan Murail, Elliott Carter, Philippe Hurel, and Philippe Leroux, and has collaborated with younger emerging composers internationally. The ensemble's first recording, featuring the music of Tristan Murail, was released in January of 2007 and received critical acclaim worldwide.

MICHEL GALANTE has performed as principal, guest, and assistant conductor with orchestras and ensembles in the United States, Canada, and Europe. He is a doctoral candidate in composition at Columbia University. His composition awards include Hertz, Fulbright, and Mellon fellowships, and prizes from ASCAP and the Composer's Guild.

*Columbia University's Miller Theatre is located north of the Main Campus Gate
at 116th St. & Broadway on the ground floor of Dodge Hall.*

For tickets, the public should call the Miller Theatre Box Office at 212/854-7799, M-F, 12-6PM.
Tickets can also be purchased online at www.millertheatre.com.

For further information, press tickets, and to arrange interviews,
please contact Aleba Gartner Associates at 212/206-1450 or a@alebgartner.com.

For photos, please contact Charlotte Landrum at 212/854-2380 or cl2867@columbia.edu.

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