

Friday, November 10, 2023, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

San Francisco Symphony

Esa-Pekka Salonen, *music director*

Esa-Pekka Salonen, *conductor*
Carey Bell, *clarinet*

PROGRAM

Esa-Pekka SALONEN (b. 1958) *kínēma* (2021)
Dawn
Theme and variations
Pérotin dream
J.D. in memoriam
Return
Carey Bell, *clarinet*

INTERMISSION

Jens IBSEN (b. 1995) *Drowned in Light* (2023, World Premiere
and SF Symphony Commission)
Drowned in Light
Nightswimming
*Commissioned as part of the
Emerging Black Composers Project*
*The Emerging Black Composers Project is
underwritten by Michèle and Laurence Corash.*

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971) *Symphony in Three Movements* (1942–45)
Overture: Allegro
Andante – Interlude; L'istesso tempo
Con moto

*Support for the San Francisco Symphony
is provided by Fred Levin, The Shenson Foundation.*

Esa-Pekka Salonen (b. 1958)

kinēma (2021)

First SF Symphony Performances

Instrumentation: solo clarinet and strings

Duration: About 30 minutes



Andrew Eccles

Esa-Pekka Salonen was a composer long before he was a conductor, and in fact first picked up a baton in service of his composing ambitions. He studied composition and

horn at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and formed several new-music groups with his classmates Magnus Lindberg and Kaija Saariaho. As a young composer in the late 1970s, he was a disciple of the avant-garde, writing ambitiously brainy music that intentionally froze out the heart. “If I’d even mentioned emotion in my 20s, I’d have been kicked out of the gang,” he recalled in a 2007 interview with *The Guardian*.

But as his conducting career took off—leading classics as much as contemporary music—he opened a more expressive side in his writing. His tenure as music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, beginning in 1992, was as transformative for Salonen as it was for the LA Phil. His exposure to the diverse cultures of California, as well as to American classical styles (such as the post-minimalism of John Adams), remade his music. When he stepped down from the orchestra in 2009, he reduced his conducting to focus again for a time on composing, producing a series of orchestral works including *Nyx* (2011), *Pollux* (2018), and *Castor* (2019). His recent works still have a certain cerebral quality and an openness to surprise and sonic invention, but seem more expressive and transporting than simply provocative. In the words of the critic Paul Griffiths, “He is, in everything he

does, a composer of dream landscapes, through which we are led to encounter things at once strange and familiar, and always full of character.”

Salonen has been a composer in residence with the New York Philharmonic and most recently Berlin Philharmonic. In 2014, he won the Nemmers Composition Prize, which included a residency at Northwestern University and performances by the Chicago Symphony. In 2011 his Violin Concerto won the Grawemeyer Award, and his early *Floof* won the UNESCO Rostrum Prize. Today his music is performed by major orchestras across the world, led both by Salonen himself and other leading conductors. (See page 14 for Esa-Pekka Salonen’s full biography.)

Salonen’s *kinēma* comprises five “scenes” for solo clarinet and string orchestra. It was commissioned and premiered in 2021 by the Finnish Radio Symphony and its principal clarinetist, Christoffer Sundqvist. The title comes from the Ancient Greek word for “movement,” which gives us the word “cinema” in English. Much of the material came from Salonen’s score for the 2021 Finnish film *Odotus* (*The Wait*), a romance set on a remote Baltic island. The piece’s small forces were influenced by pandemic-era constraints, though it has a precedent in Aaron Copland’s 1949 Clarinet Concerto, which is similarly scored. Salonen described:

I thought it would be nice to write a piece that didn’t require a huge orchestra, that could be played under more intimate conditions. [At first] I decided to call it “five scenes,” because the movements are not necessarily interconnected, and also they are more like spaces, where you can exist for a few minutes. The title *kinēma* comes from the fact that the material is based on film scores. Most of it is very lyrical, and you might imagine a romantic film—a triangle drama, say.

There's a lot of music that could be characterized as "beautiful," in the old-fashioned sense of the word. On the surface it doesn't sound "modern." The finale has different kinds of mood, different kinds of material, and then it ties everything together and quotes the very first movement of the piece.

—*Benjamin Pesetsky*

Benjamin Pesetsky is Associate Director of Editorial for the San Francisco Symphony. He has also written program notes for the Philadelphia Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, and Melbourne Symphony.

Jens Ibsen (b. 1995)

***Drowned in Light* (2023, World Premiere and SF Symphony Commission)**

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets (2nd doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons (2nd doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (triangle, trap set, glockenspiel, vibraphone, tubular bells, and marimba), harp, piano, electric guitar, and strings

Duration: About 15 minutes



Jens Ibsen is the 2022 winner of the San Francisco Symphony and San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Emerging Black Composers Project. A composer and a tenor, he has also

been commissioned by the Oregon Bach Festival Composer Symposium, Impulse New Music Festival, Mary Pickford Foundation, and the Kennedy Center's Cartography Project. He has sung with the Choir of Trinity Wall Street in New York, OS Ensemble, and spent two-and-a-half years as a member of the Vienna Boys Choir.

Ibsen was born in Ghana to an American father, who was in the country to study West African Drumming, and a Ghanaian mother. "I literally exist because of an interest in world music," he said in an interview for SFCM. When he was nine months old, his family moved to the United States, where they settled in Daly City. He sang locally with Ragazzi Boys Chorus, and then auditioned for the Vienna Boys Chorus, moving to Austria after being accepted. He later earned a bachelor of arts in music composition at Pepperdine University and a master of music from the Mannes School of Music. His composition teachers include Missy Mazzoli, Randall Woolf, Matthew Brown, and Matthew Cmiel.

Jens Ibsen writes:

All artists have obsessions, and some obsessions are life-long. A few of my own have been classical-era musical forms like sonata and rondo form, modern pop-song structures, bass-driven grooves, polyrhythm, and vernacular musical styles—in short, chasing after the sweet spot of what's catchy and complex. This piece incorporates all of these elements; it is a concise distillation of my musical philosophy and my feelings about the San Francisco Bay Area, my home.

The title of the piece and its first movement is both an allusion to one of my favorite Rolo Tomassi tracks, *A Flood of Light*, and also from how the music appeared to me in my mind; I have various forms of synesthesia, so the imagery associated with the themes came to me like bright, overwhelming light. Musical material often comes to me spontaneously, I do much of my writing in my head and developed most of the first movement of this piece this way. At the time I was listening to a lot of Rolo Tomassi, a UK-based band that blends shoegaze and hardcore to make music that is both sensitive and exhilarating. I knew that to channel these hardcore sounds, I needed the proper instrumentation. I've written several pieces for acoustic instru-

ments imitating electric ones, but for this piece I knew I had to have the real thing. As a result, the first movement is very electric-guitar-forward, almost like a concerto. Structurally, it has a song-like form with a refrain introduced in the slow introduction that gradually is developed and expanded over the course of the piece, with various episodes foregrounding either the guitar or the ensemble. Drumming is integral to this style of music, so naturally there is a prominent drum-set part as well.

The second movement is much more sedate. The mental picture I have of the music contains deep hues of the night sky, hence the title “Nightswimming.” After being drowned in light, the listener comes up from the depths into a beautiful, azure evening. I wanted this piece to be imbued with the softer side of shoegaze and surf rock, giving it a nostalgic, yearning feeling. My many years of sunlit days and moonlit evenings growing up in the Bay have coalesced into the sounds of this work, my poem to the place I call home.

—B.P.

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

Symphony in Three Movements (1942–45)

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 3 clarinets (3rd doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, harp, piano, and strings

Duration: About 22 minutes



Except for the not-quite-one-minute *Greeting Prelude* for Pierre Monteux’s 80th birthday, the *Symphony in Three Movements* was Stravinsky’s last work for big orchestra and in

the big-orchestra style. That was a style in which Stravinsky had not worked for years. At the work’s premiere, the densely packed orchestral sonority came in for a good deal of comment, as did the un-

bridled physical energy of the first and third movements. In the 1930s and 1940s, it was widely assumed that the old Stravinsky was dead, and the rugged sounds and exciting syncopations of the new *Symphony* raised hopes that the effete Parisian neoclassicist had, thank heaven, reverted to his *sacrale* Russian roots. (Of course the brash—and so American—final chord was much remarked upon, disapprovingly.)

In 1907, when he was still studying with Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky wrote a symphony—in part, I suppose, to be respectable, in part as an exercise of craft. That early *Symphony* in E-flat is an attractive piece; but from the composer of *Firebird* and the *Requiem Canticles* and two or three dozen masterpieces in between, one expects so much more. It was years before Stravinsky wrote another symphony. *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920) suggests “symphony,” but the composer really meant “symphonies” literally as “sounding together.” The *Symphony of Psalms* (1930) is obviously a special case, too. So the two real Stravinsky symphonies are the *Symphony in C*, begun in 1938 in France and finished in 1940 in this country, and the “all-American” *Symphony in Three Movements*.

Tautly concentrated and quite short, the *Symphony in Three Movements* nonetheless feels big, like a symphony. At the same time, Stravinsky achieves a sense of symphonic breadth and pace without making development of themes in the familiar sense the mainstay of his dialectic.

The work is made of blocks set unmitigated, unmodulated, side by side; here, in fact, is a connection with Stravinsky’s past. The first movement falls into three large divisions, roughly in the proportions 2:3:1. The first of these sections is in the big-band style; the second is more chamber-musical in character; the third reverts mainly to the manner of the first, but,

carrying over some elements of the second, functions as well as a synthesis of the opposing elements.

Within each section Stravinsky moves abruptly from point to point. In the first minute, the arresting opening gesture for almost the full orchestra is followed by a passage of stalking horn and trumpet calls against chugging clarinet chords, and that by a passage for strings and piano. But along with these jolts, or underneath them, Stravinsky sets things that bind, connections established by nicely placed reminders of certain harmonies or melodic contours or sonorities. Even the tempos of the tutti and concertante middle sections, though they feel very different, share a common pulse.

Stravinsky stated that this first movement was designed originally as a work with an important solo piano part. In the second movement, Stravinsky gives a prominent part to the harp, and it becomes the task of the finale to provide a piano-harp synthesis.

In his program note for the premiere of the *Symphony* he insisted that the work was absolute music. But in 1963, in *Dialogues and a Diary*, he admitted specifically the influence of movies in the first and third movements, of a documentary on scorched-earth tactics in China in the former, of newsreel footage of goose-stepping soldiers in the latter. Moreover, the last part of the finale was associated in his mind with “the rise of the Allies after the overturning of the German war machine.”

Whatever the inner and outer sources, Stravinsky gave us a work of remarkable brilliance and power. The first movement rocks with a fierce accent, pungent harmony, and rapidly clangorous sound. In the Andante, Stravinsky follows (or perhaps doesn't) Beethoven's frequent example of offering something more of an intermezzo or a bridge than a fully worked movement. The finale is reached, without a break, by way of a seven-measure interlude that, with an amazing economy of means, sets the scene for the harmonies and textures to come. After the transparent sonorities of the second movement—they are too hard-edged to be called delicate—Stravinsky returns to the massive tones of the first movement. One of the finale's mini-chapters is a fugue whose jagged intervals suddenly look ahead to the Stravinsky of the late 1950s and 1960s. Stravinsky, by the way, suggests the possibility that this fugue is in some way the continuation of the one started, then “abandoned . . . like a very hot potato,” in the corresponding movement of the *Symphony* in C. The abundant physical thrust of the first movement returns, too, and the finale, as Stravinsky's “program” indicates, concludes in assertive triumph.

—Michael Steinberg

Michael Steinberg, the San Francisco Symphony's program annotator from 1979 to 1999 and a contributing writer until his death in 2009, was one of the nation's preeminent writers on music.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The *San Francisco Symphony* is among the most artistically adventurous and innovative arts institutions in the United States, 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* welcomed conductor and composer Esa-Pekka Salonen as its twelfth Music Director, embarking on a new vision for the present and future of the orchestral landscape. In their inaugural season together, Salonen and the *San Francisco Symphony* introduced 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, along with Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony, have set out to explore and develop new ideas inspired by the Partners' unique areas of expertise, including innovative digital projects, expansive and imaginative performance concepts in a variety of concert formats, commissions of new music, and projects that foster collaboration across artistic and administrative areas.



Cody Pickens

Esa-Pekka Salonen is known as both a composer and conductor. He is the Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony, where he works alongside eight Collaborative Partners from a variety of disciplines, ranging from composers to roboticists. He is the conductor laureate of the Philharmonia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Swedish Radio Symphony

Orchestra. As a member of the faculty of the Colburn School, he directs the preprofessional Negaunee Conducting Program. Salonen cofounded, and until 2018 served as the Artistic Director of, the annual Baltic Sea Festival.

Beginning with the Opening Night Gala, Salonen leads the San Francisco Symphony in twelve weeks of programming during the 2023–24 season. Highlights include world premieres from Jesper Nordin, Anders Hillborg, and Jens Ibsen; projects by Collaborative Partners Pekka Kuusisto and Carol Reiley; the launch of the inaugural California Festival; a tour of Southern California; and a program of Ravel and Schoenberg featuring choreography by Alonzo King and staging by Peter Sellars.

He will also conduct many of his own works this season around the world. Among them are a new work commemorating the 20th anniversary of Walt Disney Concert Hall, premiering with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; *Karawane*, also with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; his *Sinfonia Concertante* for Organ and Orchestra with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Philadelphia Orchestra; and *kinēma* with the San Francisco Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra.

Salonen has an extensive and varied recording career. Releases with the San Francisco Symphony include recordings of Bartók's piano concertos, as well as spatial audio recordings of several Ligeti compositions. Other recent recordings include Strauss's *Four Last Songs*, Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarin* and *Dance Suite*, and a 2018 box set of Salonen's complete Sony recordings. His compositions appear on releases from Sony, Deutsche Grammophon, and Decca; his Piano Concerto, Violin Concerto, and Cello Concerto all appear on recordings he conducted himself.



Carey Bell joined the San Francisco Symphony as Principal Clarinet in 2007 and holds the William R. & Gretchen B. Kimball Chair. This week's concerts mark his seventh solo appearances with the orchestra, having previously performed Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto with Herbert Blomstedt, Debussy's *Première Rapsodie* and Bernstein's *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs* with Michael Tilson Thomas, and Mozart's Clarinet Concerto on three occasions with Jaap van Zweden, Bernard Labadie, and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Cultivating a career in the Bay Area for over two decades, Bell has performed with numerous local orchestras and chamber ensembles. He is a former member of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players and has participated in several other local contemporary music groups. His summer engagements have included appearances at the Marlboro Music Festival, Music@Menlo, Oregon Bach Festival,

and Telluride Chamber Music Festival. Notable chamber performances include collaboration with violist Scott St. John and pianist Jonathan Biss for San Francisco Performances, and Lukas Foss's *Echoi* with Jeremy Denk, Peter Wyrick, and Jack van Geem, as part of the San Francisco Symphony's 2012 American Mavericks tour, culminating in a performance at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall.

Bell was born and raised in Eugene, Oregon, where he developed his musical skills as a pianist, singer, and composer. After taking up clarinet at age 12, he studied for several years with Cindi Bartels. He received several honors as a young clarinetist, and he wrote a symphonic overture performed by the Oregon Symphony in 1992. For his undergraduate work, he studied with Fred Ormand at the University of Michigan and pursued a composition degree with William Bolcom, Bright Sheng, Michael Daugherty, and Evan Chambers. As a student, he participated in summer fellowships at Tanglewood and the Music Academy in Santa Barbara. After graduating he continued his clarinet studies with Larry Combs, then principal clarinet of the Chicago Symphony.

Bell spent one year as a member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago before winning his first audition for principal clarinet of the Syracuse Symphony in 1998. He became principal of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra in 2001, and has served as acting principal of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra and guest principal of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Bell teaches at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and formerly taught at Stanford University.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

Esa-Pekka Salonen, *Music Director*

Nicholas Britell • Julia Bullock • Claire Chase • Bryce Dessner • Pekka Kuusisto •

Nico Muhly • Carol Reiley • esperanza spalding, *Collaborative Partners*

Michael Tilson Thomas, *Music Director Laureate*

Herbert Blomstedt, *Conductor Laureate*

Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, *Resident Conductor of Engagement and Education*

Jenny Wong, *Chorus Director*

Daniel Stewart, *San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra Wattis Foundation Music Director*

Elias Brown, *Salonen Fellow, Colburn School of Music, Negaunee Conducting Program*

Vance George, *Chorus Director Emeritus*

FIRST VIOLINS

Alexander Barantschik,
Concertmaster
Naoum Blinder *Chair*
Wyatt Underhill, *Acting Associate*
Concertmaster
San Francisco Symphony
Foundation Chair
Jeremy Constant, *Acting Assistant*
Concertmaster
75th Anniversary *Chair*
Mariko Smiley, *Acting Assistant*
Concertmaster
Paula & John Gams
Second Century *Chair*
Melissa Kleinbart
Katharine Hamrahan Chair
Nadya Tichman*
Yun Chu
Naomi Kazama Hull
In Sun Jiang
Yukiko Kurakata
Catherine A. Mueller Chair
Suzanne Leon
Leor Maltinski
Sarn Oliver
Florin Parvulescu
Victor Romasevich
Catherine Van Hoesen*

SECOND VIOLINS

Dan Carlson, *Principal*
Dinner & Swig Families Chair
Jessie Fellows, *Acting Associate*
Principal
Audrey Avis Aasen-Hull Chair
Olivia Chen, *Acting Assistant*
Principal
Kelly Leon-Pearce
The Eucalyptus Foundation
Second Century *Chair*
Raushan Akhmedyarova
David Chernyavsky
John Chisholm
Cathryn Down
Darlene Gray
Stan & Lenora Davis Chair
Amy Hiraga
Kum Mo Kim
Chunming Mo
Polina Sedukh
Isaac Stern Chair
Chen Zhao

VIOLAS

Jonathan Vinocour, *Principal*
Yun Jie Liu,* *Associate Principal*
Katie Kadarauich, *Assistant*
Principal
Katarzyna Bryla
Joanne E. Harrington & Lorry
I. Lokey Second Century Chair
Gina Cooper
David Gaudry
David Kim
Christina King
Leonid Plashinov-Johnson
Nanci Severance
Adam Smyla
Matthew Young

CELOS

Rainer Eudeikis, *Principal*
Phillip S. Boone Chair
Amos Yang, *Acting Associate*
Principal
Peter & Jacqueline Hoefler Chair
Sébastien Gingras, *Acting*
Assistant Principal
Karel & Lida Urbanek Chair
Peter Wyrick
Lyman & Carol Casey
Second Century *Chair*
Barbara Andres
The Stanley S. Langendorf
Foundation Second
Century Chair
Barbara Bogatin
Phyllis Blair Cello Chair
Jill Rachuy Brindel
Gary & Kathleen Heidenreich
Second Century *Chair*
Vacant
Penelope Clark Second Century
Chair
David Goldblatt
Christine & Pierre Lamond
Second Century *Chair*
Vacant
Elizabeth C. Peters Cello Chair

BASSES

Scott Pingel, *Principal*
Daniel G. Smith, *Associate*
Principal
Stephen Tramontozzi, *Assistant*
Principal
Richard & Rhoda Goldman
Chair
S. Mark Wright
Lawrence Metcalf Second
Century Chair
Charles Chandler
Chris Gilbert
Brian Marcus

FLUTES

Yubeen Kim^, *Principal*
Caroline H. Hume Chair
Blair Francis Paponius, *Associate*
Principal
Catherine & Russell Clark Chair
Linda Lukas
Alfred S. & Dede Wilsey Chair
Catherine Payne, *Piccolo*
The Rainbow Piccolo Chair

OBOES

Eugene Izotov, *Principal*
Edo de Waart Chair
James Button, *Associate Principal*
Pamela Smith*
Dr. William D. Clinite Chair
Russ de Luna, *English Horn*
Joseph & Pauline Scaffidi Chair

CLARINETS

Carey Bell, *Principal*
William R. & Gretchen B. Kim-
ball Chair
Matthew Griffith, *Associate*
Principal & E-flat Clarinet
Jerome Simas, *Bass Clarinet*

BASSOONS

Stephen Paulson, *Principal*
Steven Dibner, *Associate Principal*
Justin Cummings

HORNS

Robert Ward, *Principal*
Mark Almond*, *Associate Principal*
Jesse Clevenger†, *Acting Assistant*
Principal
Jonathan Ring
Jessica Valeri
Daniel Hawkins*

TRUMPETS

Mark Inouye, *Principal*
William G. Irwin Charity
Foundation Chair
Aaron Schuman, *Associate*
Principal
Peter Pastreich Chair
Guy Piddington
Ann L. & Charles B. Johnson
Chair
Jeff Biancalana

TROMBONES

Timothy Higgins, *Principal*
Robert L. Samter Chair
Nicholas Platoff, *Associate*
Principal
Paul Welcomer

TUBA

Jeffrey Anderson, *Principal*
James Irvine Chair

HARP

Katherine Siochi, *Principal*

TIMPANI

Edward Stephan, *Principal*
Marcia & John Goldman Chair
Michael Kemp†, *Acting Assistant*
Principal

PERCUSSION

Jacob Nissly, *Principal*
Michael Kemp†
James Lee Wyatt III

LIBRARIANS

Margo Kieser, *Principal*
Nancy & Charles Geschke Chair
Matt Holland-Gray, *Assistant*
Matthew Searing, *Assistant*

*On leave
†Substitute Musician
^Beginning January 2024

The San Francisco Symphony string section uses revolving seating. Players listed in alphabetical order change seats periodically.

Christopher Wood, *Stage Manager*
Michael "Barney" Barnard, *Stage*
Technician
Jon Johannsen, *Recording*
Engineer/Stage Technician
Tim Wilson, *Stage Technician*