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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

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“For 10 years now, the Composer Portraits have enticed young people who are curious about all kinds of extreme contemporary music to take chances on living classical composers.”

—*The New York Times*

MILLER THEATRE AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
opens the 12th season of its celebrated *Composer Portraits* with
Tobias Picker

Featuring works from Picker’s prolific career, spanning the 1970’s to the present day

Performers include

Sarah Rothenberg, piano • members of the Brentano String Quartet • Ensemble Signal

Thursday, October 6, 8:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$25 • CU Students: \$7 • All other students: \$15 with valid ID

From Miller Theatre Director Melissa Smey:

“This exciting season of Composer Portraits will feature three new commissions (my first as director) and composers from around the world — Sweden, Mexico, Greece, and the U.S. — and I can’t think of a better way to start us off than with a composer from right here in New York, the brilliant Tobias Picker. With operatic arias, a piano concerto, and works for chamber ensemble, Tobias’s program epitomizes what *Composer Portraits* is all about: showcasing the incredible creativity and breadth of vision of today’s great composers.”

Composer Portraits

Miller Theatre’s signature series shines the spotlight on a single contemporary composer in every concert, introducing audiences to the most important musical voices of our time. This season features a fascinatingly diverse group of composers in a series that will present 3 new commissions, 8 world premieres, 4 U.S. premieres, and 2 New York premieres. Each composer will participate in an onstage discussion at his or her Portrait.

Thursday, October 6, 8:00 p.m.

TOBIAS PICKER (b. 1954)

[*Listen Here*](#)

Acclaimed by *The New Yorker* as “a genuine creator with a fertile unforced vein of invention,” Tobias Picker’s music melds the discipline and rigor of his mentors—Charles Wuorinen, Elliott Carter, and Milton Babbitt—with an unabashed and impassioned Romantic streak. Perhaps best known for his operas, which have premiered at major houses such as the Met to widespread critical acclaim, Picker brings an equal sense of drama to his chamber music. A highlight of Miller’s Portrait is his exuberant piano concerto *Keys to the City*, written to commemorate the centenary of the Brooklyn Bridge. Plus, Sarah Rothenberg and members of the Brentano String Quartet premiere Picker’s new Piano Quintet.

ARTISTS: **Sarah Rothenberg**, piano
Members of the **Brentano String Quartet**
Kirstin Chávez, mezzo soprano
Layla Claire, soprano
Joyce El-Khoury, soprano
Gordon Gietz, tenor
David Fulmer, violin
Steven Beck, piano
Ran Dank, piano
Ensemble Signal
Frédéric Chaslin, piano and conductor

PROGRAM: Piano Quintet (2011) New York Premiere
"Diving Aria" from *An American Tragedy* (2004)
"Ghost Aria" from *Thérèse Raquin* (1999/2000)
"Miss Hedgehog's Aria" from *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (1998)
"Letter Aria" from *Emmeline* (1995)
Keys to the City (1983-87)
Rhapsody (1978)

BIOS: **Tobias Picker** (b. Manhattan, 1954) is known as "a genuine creator with a fertile unforced vein of invention" (*The New Yorker*), "displaying a distinctively soulful style that is one of the glories of the current musical scene" (*BBC Music Magazine*) and "our finest composer for the lyric stage" (*Wall Street Journal*). His music has been performed and commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, BBC Proms, Munich, Helsinki and Strasbourg Philharmonics, numerous leading international festivals, chamber ensembles, and soloists. Picker's first opera, *Emmeline* (1996) premiered at the Santa Fe Opera, telecast nationally by PBS Great Performances, led to commissions by LA Opera, The Dallas Opera, San Francisco Opera, L'Opera de Montreal and The Metropolitan Opera. New productions have appeared at New York City Opera, Covent Garden and throughout Europe. *Awakenings*, commissioned by Rambert Dance Company, was performed 80 times with live orchestra during Rambert's 2010–11 UK and European tours. By age twenty-six, Picker received the Bearn's Prize (Columbia University), BMI Award, Charles Ives Scholarship, and two fellowships from NEA, and a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship. Later he received the Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Picker's piano concerto *Keys to the City* (1983) was commissioned by the City of New York for the centenary of the Brooklyn Bridge and described as "an exuberant, brassy, celebratory evocation, 18 minutes of irrepressible energy and cosmopolitan eclecticism" (*New York Times*). Tobias Picker studied composition with Charles Wuorinen, Milton Babbitt, and Elliott Carter and holds degrees from the Manhattan School of Music, the Juilliard School, and Princeton University.

Sarah Rothenberg has one of the most distinguished and creative careers of her generation. Recognized internationally for her innovative programs linking music to literature and the visual arts, performances include Great Performers at Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center, Barbican Centre, Gilmore Keyboard Festival, and many others. A three-time winner of the Chamber Music America-ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, she also received a unique "Special Commendation for Outstanding Programming Concepts" from CMA in 1999 for her work as artistic director of Da Camera of Houston. Formerly founding co-artistic director of the Bard Music Festival, she has been a fellow of the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at The New School and artist-in-

residence at the Cynthia Mitchell Center for Collaborative Arts at University of Houston. She studied at The Curtis Institute of Music, The Juilliard School, and in Paris with Yvonne Loriod-Messiaen. She received the prestigious Medal of Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters from the French government in 2000.
http://www.dacamera.com/about/sarah_rothenberg

Brentano String Quartet

Since its inception in 1992, the Brentano String Quartet has appeared throughout the world to popular and critical acclaim. Within a few years of its formation, the Quartet garnered the first Cleveland Quartet Award and the Naumburg Chamber Music Award; and in 1996 the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center invited them to be the inaugural members of Chamber Music Society Two program. The Quartet had its first European tour in 1997. That debut recital was at London's Wigmore Hall, and the Quartet has continued its warm relationship with Wigmore. In recent seasons the Quartet has traveled widely, appearing all over the United States and Canada, and in Europe, Japan, and Australia. It has performed at Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York; the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam; the Konzerthaus in Vienna; and the Sydney Opera House. In addition to performing the entire two-century range of the standard quartet repertoire, the Brentano Quartet has a strong interest in both very old and very new music. The Quartet is named for Antonie Brentano, whom many scholars consider to be Beethoven's "Immortal Beloved," the intended recipient of his famous love confession.

David Fulmer

Still in his twenties, composer, violinist, and conductor David Fulmer is quickly emerging as one of the most unique musicians of his generation. His bold compositional aesthetic combined with his thrilling performing abilities have garnered him numerous international accolades. He is the winner of the 14th International Edvard Grieg Competition for Composers; the first American ever to receive this highly acclaimed award. He has also been a winner of an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, a BMI Composer Award, and the Charles Ives Award (Scholarship) from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. This season Fulmer made his European debut with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra performing and recording his Violin Concerto under the direction of Matthias Pintscher. After rave reviews following the premiere of his Violin Concerto at Lincoln Center, Fulmer was immediately engaged to perform the work with major orchestras and festivals throughout Europe, North America, Scandinavia and Australia. Upcoming performances of his music will be featured at the Grieg Festival in Oslo, the Mozarteum Summer Festival in Salzburg, Heidelberger Frühling Internationales Musikfestival, Tanglewood Music Center, and numerous others. Current commissioned projects include a new violin concerto, *Vor dem Morgengrauen*, for Ole Bøhn and the Sydney Conservatorium (Sydney, Australia; 101 Commissions for 100 Years Project), a cello concerto for celebrated cellist Fred Sherry, a song cycle for Tony Arnold on texts by James Fenton, a clarinet quintet for the Phoenix Ensemble, and a saxophone quintet for the JACK Quartet. His extended, hour-long triptych saxophone concerto, *On Night*, composed for saxophone and ensemble for Eliot Gattegno, will be featured this upcoming season by the Argento New Music Project. *On Night* will be recorded for release on the Tzadik label along with his Violin Concerto. Fulmer recently graduated from Juilliard, where he received his doctorate, with studies in composition with Milton Babbitt and in violin with Robert Mann. Since 2009, he has served on the faculty of Columbia University. He recently joined the Argento New Music Project as violinist, conductor, and composer.

Ran Dank was born in Israel in 1982 and started piano lessons at the age of seven. He

received his Bachelor's degree from the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University, where he studied with Emanuel Krasovsky. Mr. Dank is the recipient of grants from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation. He has a Master's degree from the Juilliard School where he worked with Emanuel Ax and Joseph Kalichstein, and was awarded the prestigious Gina Bachauer Scholarship in 2006. Mr. Dank also earned an Artist Diploma from the Juilliard School in 2009, working with Robert McDonald. He is currently pursuing his Doctor of Musical Arts with Ursula Oppens and Richard Goode at New York's City University Graduate Center. In his native Israel, Mr. Dank has performed with the symphony orchestras of Jerusalem, Rishon Lezion and Raanan and at the Israel Festival. He has been heard at the Chopin Festival in Warsaw, and at Finland's Mänttä Festival for Virtuoso Pianists. During the 2010–11 season, Mr. Dank made his debut in the Washington Performing Arts Society's prestigious Hayes Piano Series at the Kennedy Center. He appeared in recital at the Morgan Library in New York, at Lincoln Center with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and conductor Pinchas Zukerman, performed in the Young Concert Artists Musical Marathon at Symphony Space, in a two piano concert with pianist Vassilis Varvaresos, and with Fourtissimo, a piano quartet featuring pianists Vassilis Varvaresos, Soyeon Lee and Roman Rabinovich, at Carnegie's Zankel Hall. Mr. Dank is the recipient of a career development grant from the Arthur Foundation.

Ensemble Signal is a large ensemble dedicated to performing the music of our time with energy, virtuosity, and passion. Ensemble Signal performs under the musical direction of Brad Lubman, who founded the group along with cellist and co-artistic director Lauren Radnofsky. Ensemble Signal is flexible in size and instrumentation, ranging from nonet to chamber orchestra to meet the demands of its diverse repertoire. In the Fall of 2008, Ensemble Signal gave two sold-out performances of Steve Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians* and *You Are (Variations)* at Le Poisson Rouge in New York City. Capacity crowds greeted Ensemble Signal's return to LPR for a series of three concerts in the spring of 2009. The 2009–2010 season saw a tour with Helmut Lachenmann and the U.S. premiere of Harrison Birtwistle's chamber opera *The Corridor*. Ensemble Signal will also perform at the University at Buffalo as a visiting resident ensemble. In October 2010, Ensemble Signal performed Evan Ziporyn's music at Zankel Hall as part of Carnegie Hall's "Making Music" series.

Kirstin Chávez is praised for her luscious and velvety tone that transcends classification. She has created the title role of *Carmen*, one of her signature roles, in opera houses across the globe and has been called "the Carmen of a lifetime. With her dark, generous mezzo, earthy eroticism, volcanic spontaneity and smoldering charisma, Chávez has it all, including a superb command of French and a sense of humor." Other operatic highlights include engagements with The Metropolitan Opera, Santa Fe Opera, San Diego Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, the New National Theatre in Tokyo, Oper Graz in Austria, and Opera Australia.

Layla Claire's "penetrating purity" (*New York Times*) has quickly made her a sought-after artist on the world's preeminent operatic, symphonic and recital stages. Praised for thoughtful characterizations and exquisite musicality, her interpretations of Mozart's heroines have garnered accolades throughout North America and Europe. In 2010 she became the inaugural recipient of the Hildegard Behrens Foundation Award, an honor she is immensely proud to receive, once again, this season. Following July 2011 performances of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and Symphony No. 9 under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin at the Festival de Lanaudière and four concerts as a featured artist in the Met's Summer Recital Series, Layla Claire performed at the Tanglewood and Manchester Music Festivals before beginning a robust fall schedule. In October, she makes her New York

recital debut at Carnegie Hall, just one of many significant firsts in the 2011–12 season including debuts with the Dallas, Toronto, Baltimore and Kansas City symphonies as well as the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. In December she creates the role of Helena in the Metropolitan Opera's star-studded Baroque pastiche *The Enchanted Island* conducted by William Christie. In March 2012 she reprises her first operatic role, this time on the Met stage, as Gianetta in Donizetti's *L'Elisir D'Amore*. Returning to Symphony Hall in April 2012, she performs Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Boston Symphony under the baton of Bernard Haitink. Recent engagements include her Metropolitan Opera debut as Tebaldo in Verdi's *Don Carlo* conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin, her portrayal of Marenka in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* under the baton of James Levine and debuts with the Boston, San Francisco and Norrköping (Sweden) symphonies as well as the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2008 she received the Mozart Prize at the Wilhelm Stenhammar International Music Competition and was a Queen Elisabeth Competition Laureate. She is a CBC Radio-Canada Jeunes Artistes recital winner, a recipient of J. Desmarais Foundation Bursaries, and a proud recipient of a Canada Council Grant. She studied at l'Université de Montréal before attending the Curtis Institute of Music.

Joyce El-Khoury is a 2011 graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. In 2011–12 and beyond she will make her European debut as Violetta in *La Traviata* with the Welsh National Opera, and she will also record Antonina in Donizetti's *Belisario* on the Opera Rara label with Sir Mark Elder. Next season she also debuts in Beijing as Rosina in *Barber of Seville*, and further on makes her Canadian Opera Company debut in Toronto as Musetta in *La Bohème*, as well as Mimi with Opera Lyra Ottawa. In 2010–11 she returned to the Met as Frasquita in *Carmen*, performed Esmeralda in *The Bartered Bride* with Maestro Levine at Juilliard, and returned to the Maazel Castleton Festival to debut the role of Mimi in *La Bohème*. She also made her Tanglewood debut performing Beethoven's 9th Symphony.

Gordon Gietz is one of the most promising young tenors of his generation. His career is focused equally on operatic and concert repertoire, encompassing a wide range of musical styles. In the 2010–2011 season Gietz opens with a performance of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* at the Toronto Summer Music Festival under the baton of Agnes Grossman. Other concert performances include *Messiah* with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of Paul Goodwin and concert performances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic of Stravinsky's *Les Noces* and the world premiere of Gerald Barry's *The Importance of Being Earnest* under the baton Thomas Adès. Operatic engagements include performances of *L'Heure espagnole* at the Edinburgh Festival, *Káta Kabanová* at La Monnaie and *Wozzeck* at Köln Opera.

Frédéric Chaslin

Conductor, pianist, composer and author, Frédéric Chaslin was born in Paris and educated at the Paris Conservatoire and the Salzburg Mozarteum. He began his conducting career in 1989 as assistant to Daniel Barenboim in Paris and Bayreuth, Germany. He became Pierre Boulez's assistant at the Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris in 1991. Mr. Chaslin made his Santa Fe Opera debut in 2009 conducting Verdi's *La Traviata* and will open the 2011 season with Gounod's *Faust*. Major international festivals and opera companies at which Mr. Chaslin has appeared include leading houses in New York, Berlin, Munich, Leipzig, Madrid, Barcelona, Rome, Venice, Scotland, and Wales. He has also led all the major Parisian orchestras, the Vienna Symphony and Philharmonic, the Manchester Hallé, and the London Symphony and Philharmonia. He served as the chief conductor of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra from 1999 to 2002, and was a resident conductor at the

Vienna Staatsoper starting in 1997, conducting more than 110 performances of major repertory. He was named general music director of Germany's Nationaltheater Mannheim in 2005. Mr. Chaslin made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 2002, conducting *Il Trovatore* to great acclaim, and since then has led Met productions of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Sicilian Vespers*, *The Barber of Seville*, and *La Bohème*. He conducted *Romeo and Juliet* at the Los Angeles Opera in 2005. Among his performances as pianist, Mr. Chaslin appeared with the Vienna Philharmonic in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5, and from the keyboard he conducted Ravel's G Major Concerto in Japan, Italy, and Israel. Frédéric Chaslin is currently Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Santa Fe Opera, and has recently been designated Music Director of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, starting September 2012.

Upcoming *Composer Portraits* at Miller Theatre

Single tickets: \$25 • Subscriptions: \$120 for 6 concerts; \$80 for 4 concerts

George Lewis	Saturday, November 12
John Zorn	Friday, December 9
Karin Rehnqvist	Thursday, March 22
Hilda Paredes	Saturday, May 12
Georges Aperghis	Thursday, May 24

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

Subscriptions and single tickets are now available online at www.millertheatre.com.

The public may also purchase tickets through the Miller Theatre Box Office in person or at 212/854-7799, M-F, 12-6 p.m.

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

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