

44th SEASON



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE/ONLINE POSTING:**

October 12, 2023

Contact: Terry Conway

(415) 677-0328 or [terry@sfperformances.org](mailto:terry@sfperformances.org)

---

**SAN FRANCISCO PERFORMANCES PRESENTS  
MIRANDA CUCKSON | VIOLIN  
BLAIR MCMILLEN | PIANO**



**Thursday, November 2, 2023 | 7:30pm  
Herbst Theatre**

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA** – October 12, 2023 – San Francisco Performances (SFP) presents two internationally celebrated young artists: **violinist Miranda Cuckson** and **pianist Blair McMillen**, on **Thursday, November 2, 2023, 7:30pm** at **Herbst Theatre**. **Tickets are \$70/\$60/\$50 and can be purchased at [sfperformances.org](http://sfperformances.org) or by calling 415.392.2545. Tickets can also be purchased at the door as available, including 50% off student rush tickets and 20% off senior rush tickets.**

“We are delighted to present the San Francisco recital debut of violinist Miranda Cuckson and pianist Blair McMillen. From the Berlin Philharmonic to the Ojai Festival and the National Sawdust, these artists continue to be celebrated for their mastery and expansive repertoire. Their program perfectly showcases their virtuosity and artistic range. This concert promises to be one of the most exciting debuts of our season.” — Melanie Smith, SFP President

**ABOUT MIRANDA CUCKSON**

Violinist/violist **Miranda Cuckson** delights audiences with her playing of a great range of music and styles, from older eras to the very newest creations. A distinctive, internationally acclaimed soloist and collaborator, she performs at venues large and small, from casual spaces to concert halls. These have included the Berlin Philharmonie, Suntory Hall, Casa da Musica Porto, Teatro Colón, Cleveland Museum, Art Institute of Chicago, Strathmore, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra’s Liquid Music series, National Sawdust, and the Ojai, Bard, Marlboro, Portland, Music Mountain, West Cork, Grafenegg, Wien Modern, and

LeGuessWho festivals. Miranda made her Carnegie Hall debut playing Walter Piston's Concerto No. 1 with the American Symphony Orchestra. She recently premiered Georg Friedrich Haas' Violin Concerto No. 2 with four orchestras in Japan and Europe, and the Violin Concerto by Marcela Rodriguez with the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México. Upcoming concerts include the 92nd St Y, recitals at San Francisco Performances and on tour in Germany, and the Haas concerto with the Vienna Radio Symphony at the Musikverein.

Miranda is dedicated to music old and new, playing Western classical repertoire along with giving innumerable performances of new music and helping to bring new creations more to the center of cultural life. Reflecting her deeply felt perspective as a multiethnic American, Miranda works with an array of artists from many backgrounds. She has had many substantial works written for her and she works with promising young artists and the most renowned composers of our time. She is a member of interdisciplinary collective AMOC\* and founder/director of music non-profit Nunc. She has guest curated at National Sawdust and done programming of chamber concerts at the Contempo series in Chicago and Miller Theater in New York, among others.

Miranda's albums include Világ featuring the Bartok solo sonata along with new works; a live recording of the Ligeti Violin Concerto; the Korngold and Ponce concertos; several albums of solo and duo music by major American composers; Bartók, Schnittke and Lutoslawski on ECM; Melting the Darkness, an album of microtonal and electronic pieces; and Nono's La lontananza nostalgica utopica futura, which was named a Best Recording of the Year by the New York Times.

Miranda is an alumna of The Juilliard School, having studied there from Pre-College through her doctorate degree, and she was awarded the school's Presser Music Award. She teaches violin and chamber music at the Mannes School of Music at the New School. Born in 1972, she is a US citizen of Austrian/Czech/Slovak, English, and Taiwanese descent.

## **ABOUT BLAIR MCMILLEN**

Pianist **Blair McMillen** has forged a musical life that is unbounded by convention. He is well-known for his advocacy of living composers and contemporary music, as well as for championing very early keyboard music and more recent neglected masterpieces. For more than two decades, McMillen has divided his time as piano soloist, chamber musician, music festival director, and educator/teacher.

Blair McMillen has performed in major concert venues in New York, throughout the United States, and around the world. Recent appearances include concertos with the American Symphony Orchestra in Carnegie Hall, solo appearances with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and a 3-week solo tour of Brazil sponsored by the US State Department. He is a member of several prominent ensembles, including the American Modern Ensemble, the six-piano "supergroup" Grand Band, and the Perspectives Ensemble, among others. For 10 years he was pianist for the Naumburg Award-winning Da Capo Chamber Players. He has also performed with the International Contemporary Ensemble, the Knights, and the LPR Ensemble.

As a teacher and pedagogue, McMillen is in high demand. He has taught at Bard College and Conservatory since 2005, and he serves on the piano and collaborative piano faculty at Mannes at the New School in New York City. He regularly adjudicates at competitions and festivals throughout the United

States and abroad. In past summers, McMillen has taught at the Elm City Chamber Festival, the Xi'an Festival, the Wellesley Composers Conference, the Samuel Barber Institute, FEMUSC (Brazil), and the Bennington Chamber Music Festival, to name a few.

His first solo CD, *Soundings*, was released to critical acclaim in 2001. Since then, Blair McMillen has been featured on dozens of commercially-released solo, chamber, and orchestral recordings. An album of two-piano music with Stephen Gosling, *Powerhouse Pianists II*, was declared "one of the finest piano recordings in 2016" by NPR. An ECM recording with violinist Miranda Cuckson was hailed by *The Guardian* for "...playing that is frank and urgent, with powerfully stripped-back quiet passages and gritted-teeth ecstatic climaxes." McMillen was featured on Harold Meltzer's Grammy©-nominated *Songs and Structures*. And in 2021, Naxos released McMillen's recording of Joan Tower's piano concerto *Still/Rapids* with the Albany Symphony Orchestra.

Blair McMillen is the co-founder and co-director of the Rite of Summer Music Festival. Rite of Summer is a free, outdoor contemporary-music series held on New York City's Governors Island. The festival has presented boundary-pushing artists such as the JACK Quartet, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Tigue, Theo Bleckmann, Todd Reynolds, Contemporaneous, and Don Byron's New Gospel Quintet. Rite of Summer is the only annual music festival on Governors Island, a place the *New Yorker* has called "an enormous playground for the arts."

Blair McMillen holds degrees from Oberlin College, Manhattan School of Music, and The Juilliard School. He lives in New York with his wife Kay and son Conor.

**Watch Miranda Cuckson play Sam Perkin's [Language](#)**

**Watch Blair McMillen play William Bolcom's [The Serpent's Kiss](#)**

**The evening's program** will include works by **JANÁČEK**, **BEETHOVEN**, **PROKOFIEV**, and **ROSS LEE FINNEY**

---

**Please note our health and safety protocols:** Masks and up-to-date vaccinations are encouraged but not required to attend our performances. This policy will be adjusted if city or state health orders change.

---

## **ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO PERFORMANCES**

San Francisco Performances has been a leader in the Bay Area cultural scene since our founding in 1979. With a strong curatorial vision and adventurous programming, we are the city's premier presenter of intimate concerts and solo performances.

We have introduced hundreds of established and emerging classical music, jazz, and dance artists to audiences, including Yo-Yo Ma, the Juilliard String Quartet, Philip Glass, Wendy Whelan, and the Paul Taylor Dance Company. We also champion a new generation, committed to building a contemporary and equitable repertoire. Performers like the Catalyst Quartet, violinist Jennifer Koh, tenor Lawrence Brownlee, and pianist/composer Vijay Iyer are moving their art into the present and future, making it accessible to younger audiences while converting many traditionalists to new possibilities. They represent the path forward.

Quality, intimacy, and connection are the hallmarks of San Francisco Performances. We nurture unique relationships with today's best artists to create an accessible, warm, and engaging arts experience.

**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

*(Please include [our name as the presenter](#) --many thanks!)*

**SAN FRANCISCO PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**MIRANDA CUCKSON, VIOLIN, AND BLAIR MCMILLEN, PIANO**

**WHEN: Thursday, November 2, 2023, 7:30pm**

**WHERE: Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Avenue (at McAllister), San Francisco**

**PROGRAM: Works by JANÁČEK, BEETHOVEN, PROKOFIEV, and ROSS LEE FINNEY**

**CONCERT TICKETS: \$70/\$60/\$50**

**CONTACT: (415) 392.2545; [sfperformances.org](https://sfperformances.org)**

**For high-resolution images, contact Terry Conway at [terry@sfperformances.org](mailto:terry@sfperformances.org)  
or click [here](#).**

#

#

#