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**XAVIER MUZIK ANNOUNCED AS WINNER OF THIRD ANNUAL EMERGING BLACK COMPOSERS PROJECT PRIZE, NOW KNOWN AS MICHAEL MORGAN PRIZE**

*Muzik will receive a \$15,000 commission and mentorship, and his piece will premiere with the San Francisco Symphony during the 2024–25 season*

*The award will now be called the Michael Morgan Prize in honor of the late conductor*

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**—The San Francisco Symphony, in partnership with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM) and the SFCM President’s Advisory Council on Equity and Inclusion, announced today that Xavier Muzik is the winner of the third annual Emerging Black Composers Project (EBCP) prize. The San Francisco Symphony, led by Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen, will give the world premiere of his work during the 2024–25 season.

In addition to announcing Muzik as the newest winner, the Emerging Black Composers Project award will now be called the Michael Morgan Prize. Morgan was music director of the Oakland Symphony and the first chair and co-founder of the EBCP before he died in 2021. Morgan was dedicated to music education and a believer in the power of music to change communities for the better.

“The Oakland Symphony is thrilled to have this prize named after Michael Morgan,” said Oakland Symphony Executive Director Dr. Mieko Hatano. “This project was extremely important to him as a lifelong champion of living, lost, and underrepresented composers. He will forever be our guiding light and force behind those values we continue to uplift as an orchestra. With this new honor, he will aptly live on in the notes of every prize-winning composer.”

As winner of the Michael Morgan Prize, Muzik will receive a \$15,000 commissioning fee, mentorship from committee members, and resources to workshop his piece with SFCM, along with a premiere of the work at Davies Symphony Hall. Muzik joins Jens Ibsen, Trevor Weston, Sumi Tonooka, Jonathan Bingham, and Shawn Okpebholo as winners of the 10-year project.

Xavier Muzik is a Los Angeles based composer whose music is known for its driving nature and rich harmonic language. He aspires to increase the reach of contemporary concert music to more people of color and people of varying social and economic classes with the goal of making the world of contemporary concert music a more inclusive one, which he believes is key to the future of the genre.

“Music is history and music is culture,” said Muzik. “Composition is the practice of balancing these forces through creation, which has, for me, helped enlighten my identity. And I’m so grateful for this opportunity to continue that practice in collaboration with the amazing people, players, and administrators of these fine institutions.”

Muzik was selected as the winner through an anonymous review process overseen by a selection committee led by EBCP Chair Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, and including SFCM Music Director Edwin Outwater and San Francisco Symphony Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen.

“We are extremely happy with our winner this year and were unified in our approval of Xavier Musik’s work,” said Bartholomew-Poyser. “It was my pleasure to let him know he won and receive his heartfelt and surprised reaction. It was also my pleasure to communicate to him our wholehearted enthusiasm for his work. We are very much looking forward not only to the work that he will create for the commission, but to working with him as he develops relationships with the many orchestras that will invariably want to collaborate with him.”

“Xavier’s music has great depth and drama, and really digs into big orchestral sounds and gestures,” said Outwater. “I’m really looking forward to hearing what he writes next for the San Francisco Symphony.”

Xavier Muzik holds a master’s degree in music composition and a graduate minor in Creative Community Development from the Mannes School of Music at The New School. He received his bachelor’s degree in music composition from the California Institute of the Arts.

The Emerging Black Composers Project intends to spotlight early-career Black American composers and their music. It was launched in 2020 with the first-place commission given in June of 2021 to Trevor Weston.

*The Emerging Black Composers Project is made possible through the generosity of Michèle and Laurence Corash.*

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

The San Francisco Symphony is among the most 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 12th Music Director, embarking on a new vision for the present and future of the orchestral landscape. In their inaugural season together, Mr. 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. Shaped by the dynamic partnership and shared vision of Mr. Salonen, the Collaborative Partners, and the Orchestra and Chorus, the San Francisco Symphony's 2022–23 season reflects a spirit of collaboration, experimentation, and renewed dialogue through live music.

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

SFCM draws on the bold creativity of San Francisco to offer unparalleled training for the 21st century musician. We support students in developing the skills and vision to chart successful careers and advance the human experience through music. We believe a musical education must extend far beyond technical and performance skills. Our commitment to music of enduring quality and importance is the foundation of our innovative curriculum, cultivating critical thinking and business acumen alongside artistic practice, and creating a transformative environment of inquiry, collaboration, and entrepreneurship. Our DNA combines a global perspective with the unstoppable energy and imagination of our hometown. Our pioneering programs and partnerships with leading institutions and businesses prepare students to seize opportunities in music and a wide array of the fastest developing sectors today. SFCM is a magnet for exceptional faculty whose ongoing professional experience benefits our students. As the only conservatory partnered with a leading artist management company and recording label, we are able to provide our students unique insight and access to the music industry.

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