

# Moemi

Concerto for marimba  
and orchestra



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composer

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I met Alejandra Odgers at the Université de Montréal in 2004 while we were both Doctoral students. At that time, Alejandra had approached me to better understand the technical characteristics of the marimba, an instrument she had chosen to showcase for her next composition. We really hit it off at our initial meeting and our first collaboration resulted in the creation of *Moemi*, concerto for marimba and orchestra. The work was hugely successful. It garnered the *Prix de création en arts de la scène* at the 2007 *Gala de la culture de Longueuil* in addition to being selected for the closing concert at the *International New Music Festival Manuel Enriquez (FIMNME)* in Mexico, June 8, 2008.

Alejandra's compositional style is very unique. Unlike the majority of Canadians, Alejandra was raised in Mexico, surrounded by marimbas (the marimba is a Mexican traditional instrument). During my stay in Mexico, I did indeed appreciate these traditional marimba ensembles that one can find at the open-air markets. To have initially known this instrument in a "non-classical" context makes it possible for Alejandra to provide a new approach to the marimba repertoire. Her style of writing brings elements of freshness by way of incorporating traditional influences.

*Moemi* is, in my opinion, an exceptional work and one of the most interesting concertos for marimba ever written. Through each of its four movements, the listener is immersed in an experience at once dynamic, lively, joyful and captivating. Alejandra's skilful orchestration lets us discover rich textures and colours. In today's context of symphonic music, where Canadian creation is encouraged, this work provides exactly what the public and many artistic directors are seeking, that is, a work that is original yet accessible, that reveals a new instrument to a public in search of discovery.

~ Catherine Meunier

## The Performer



A native of Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada, **Catherine Meunier** began her percussion studies at the age of twelve. She is the first percussionist to win the prestigious Prix d'Europe and, on this occasion, she also received the Canadian Music Centre Prize for the best interpretation of a Canadian composition.

As a soloist and chamber musician, Catherine Meunier has given concerts in Canada, the U.S., Mexico, Taiwan and Japan. She has been a guest soloist with the *Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional* of Mexico, the *Orchestre symphonique de Longueuil* and *Ensemble Prestissimo*. Her duo, with flautist Marie-Hélène Breault, performed over forty concerts in Quebec, Ontario and the Maritimes as part of the 2004-2005 Jeunesses Musicales of Canada concert season. The duo was also a finalist of the prestigious *Opus* prize 2006-2007 for *Concert of the year – Regions*. She is an active performer of contemporary music, having premiered many works for marimba or percussion by composers such as Andrew MacDonald, Michel Frigon, Alejandra Odgers, Nicolas Gilbert, Christien Ledroit, Katia Makdissi-Warren and Emily Hall. In November 2006, she was a guest performer at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Austin, Texas, alongside Shawn Mativetsky and Marie-Hélène Breault. She has given several master classes in Canada in addition to being a jury member at the Canadian Music Competition. She is a founding member of the *Ensemble Mont-Royal* and the violin-marimba duo, *The Wooden Project*. She is also heard on the airwaves of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Radio-Canada and Opus 94 (Mexico).

Catherine Meunier completed her Doctor of Music in Performance at the Université de Montréal. She also holds a Graduate Performance Diploma from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, a Master of Music in Performance from McGill University and a Bachelor of Music in Performance from the University of Sherbrooke. She has studied with numerous professors such as Robert van Sice, Mario Boivin, Serge Desgagnés, D'Arcy Gray, Andrei Malashenko and Pierre Béluse.

Catherine Meunier is sponsored by the Pearl/Adams Corporation.

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## The Composer



Originating from Mexico and now a Canadian resident, **Alejandra Odgers** obtained bachelor degrees in oboe and composition at the National School of Music in Mexico. Later, she completed a master's and doctoral degree in composition at the Université de Montréal. She has studied with Francisco Viesca, Mario Lavista, Arturo Márquez, Paul Barker, José Evangelista, Alan Belkin and Jean-Jacques Nattiez, among others.

Her works have been performed throughout the Americas. Most notably, she has been premiered at the tenth *Festival de Música Contemporánea de la Habana* (Cuba), and has had her works presented at the 26<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> editions of the *Festival de Música Nueva Manuel Enríquez* (Mexico). Furthermore, her works have been performed by the *Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional* (Mexico), the *Orquesta Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México*, the *Orquesta Sinfónica Carlos Chávez* and the *Orchestre de l'Université de Montréal*.

Her music has received awards, such as the first prize of the national competition, *La música popular mexicana en la Intimidad de la Música de Cámara*, the composition competition of the *Orchestre de l'Université de Montréal*, the *Prix de création en arts de la scène* of the 2007 *Gala de la culture de Longueuil* and the national competition organized by the *Asamblea Legislativa del Distrito Federal*, which commissioned a work in homage to the victims of the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City. The *Orquesta Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México* subsequently recorded this work. Finally, two of her compositions, *Icnocúcatl* and *Trajín*, represented Mexico at the International Rostrum of Composers in Vienna (2005) and Paris (2007), respectively.